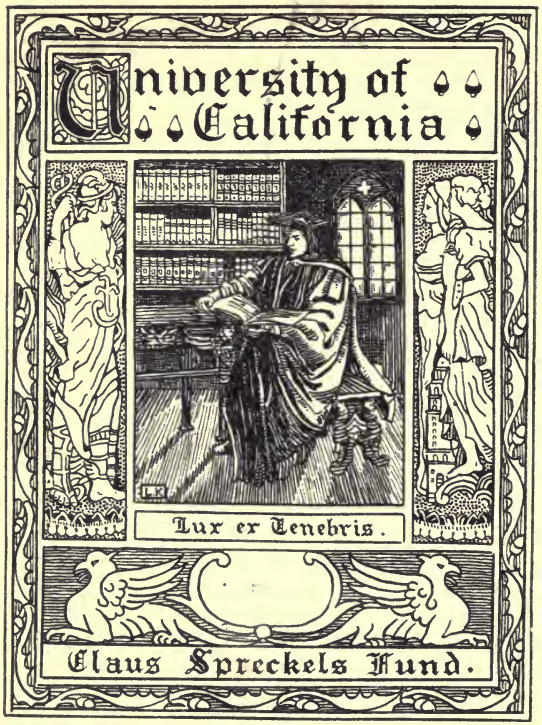
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# TRAVELS

IN

# THE UNITED STATES,

ETC.

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VOL. II.

# TRAVELS

IN

# THE UNITED STATES,

ETC.

DURING 1849 AND 1850.

BY THE

LADY EMMELINE STUART WORTLEY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1851.

E166
.S8
v.2

LONDON:
Printed by SAMUEL BENTLEY, and Co.
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

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# NARRATIVE

OF

# TRAVELS IN THE UNITED STATES,

&c.

IN 1849–50.

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## CHAPTER I.

VERA CRUZ BY MOONLIGHT.—THE "WALKER" STEAMER.—THE NEW MINISTER TO MEXICO.—LORD MARK KERR'S EXQUISITE DRAWINGS.—SCENES ON DECK.—LOVE OF MUSIC OF THE AMERICANS.—THE ASPECT OF VERA CRUZ.—EFFECTS OF A NORTHER.—SOPILOTES.—THEIR FUNCTIONS AND APPEARANCE.—THE CASTLE OF ST. JUAN D'ULLOA.—THE HARBOUR OF VERA CRUZ.—ITS COMMERCE.—ITS FOUNDATION.—THE GERMAN HOUSEKEEPER.—HER POLYGLOT STORIES.—THE ALAMEDA.—VAST NUMBER OF LADEN MULES.—DEPARTURES FOR MEXICO.—VERA CRUZIAN WATCHMEN.—DRESSES OF THE VERA CRUZIANS.

We landed at Vera Cruz by the most magnificent moonlight I think I ever beheld. A huge arch of dazzling silver sparkled overhead, and all beside seemed floating in one vast silvery sea: any place must have looked beautiful so deluged with splendour, and cer-

tainly Vera Cruz did; her defects were really dazzled away, and her beauties all glorified and increased a hundred fold.

We had a very rough passage of about ten days in the surveying steamer "Walker," of the United States Navy. She was very foul, which prevented her making a rapid passage, and the weather was against her. Every thing was done to render us as comfortable as possible. We had a charming and large cabin, and a delightful collection of books was placed at our disposal. The "Walker" is reckoned the most rolling vessel in the whole United States Navy, and she gave us during our voyage a great deal more than a touch of her quality.

Our kind and excellent friend Governor L——, the minister to Mexico, had never been at sea before in his life, and it was not to be expected he should find this tremendous tossing about very pleasant. Naturally enough he was constantly thinking we were all showing, like Falstaff, a marvellous alacrity in sinking; he suffered much too from the horrible *mal de mer*. But, notwithstanding all this, his unalterable good humour never failed him, nor his wish to see everybody comfortable around him, however uncomfortable he was himself; and very seldom did his almost inexhaustible

good spirits forsake him. Sometimes when in the midst of one of his entertaining stories, laughing and making all laugh, the frolicking steamer, as if enjoying the joke, would seem to be contemplating standing on her head, he would suddenly regain his gravity in one sense, while he lost it in another. But generally he was the life and soul of the ship: though it must be confessed the "Walker" did not exactly fly, the time did.

We had Lord M. Kerr's magnificent drawings to look at, and his richly-stocked portfolio beguiled many an hour. He is not only a most gifted but a most industrious and indefatigable amateur artist; many of his drawings are most elaborately and exquisitely finished, and their number and variety are prodigious. Here you might luxuriate among the magical beauties of queenly Granada, and bask in the sunny and fairy-like courts of the matchless Alhambra; and there the snowy winter scenes of Canada would make you almost feel the freshness of the keen clear air, so exquisitely delineated were they; and then again you had the glowing tropical scenery of the West Indies to feast your eyes upon.

The weather, after the first few days, began to be exceedingly warm. The passengers spent

almost all their time upon deck, for most of the cabins below were very close and hot: ours was an exception to this; we had a very large skylight, which was, of course, always wide open when possible, and the magnificent American flag was thrown lightly over the opening to shield us from the intense glare of the sun.

On deck, what scenes tragi-comical are ever going on! To be sure, all decks in rough weather present pretty nearly the same spectacles; yet, like the fun of Punches and puppet shows, it seems an untiring species of drollery. Look at that tall gentleman; he appears trying hard to learn to walk on his own nose, which is certainly, though not otherwise than a handsome one, quite sufficiently pointed perhaps, and projecting; but he does not wish other people should do so too — no, that would be expecting quite too much of the poor nasal organ aforesaid. But that very stout gentleman seems to intend it nevertheless, nay, to be very seriously determined on doing this; but stay! the nose rolls suddenly one way and the very stout gentleman the other; the threatened feature is safe for this time. Then they go bouncing along by fits and starts, and performing insane ko tooings to nobody, and catching tight hold of nothing, and swinging

round sometimes in a wild partnerless waltz. A reel is of cosmopolitan constitution on board ship, and the Scotch can claim no monopoly of it—all are dancing it like mad in general.

Governor L——, when not incapacitated by the *mal de mer*, zigzagged about to the utmost capacities of the "Walker," and nothing daunted, boldly attempted to walk whenever there was the least possibility of performing that most extraordinary of all imaginable feats, on board a rolling vessel on a rough sea. He wisely caught hold of every thing to steady him that happened to be nearest, and made handles and temporary sheet-anchors, of heads, ankles, benches, bonnets, boots, heels, hats, cabin boys, carpet-bags, throats, ringlets, wide-awakes, elbows, and chins, and in short, whatever came handy, dragging himself on thus with the most philosophical indifference as to whether he had griped hold of your nose or your shoe. He held on like grim death, for the nonce, "and no two ways about it."

As I said before, he was very amusing and pleasant, and had an immense flow of spirits: it was diverting to see him occasionally, when a sudden terrific lurch came, upsetting furniture and philosophy,—philosophy pathetically turning down one corner of his mouth with a lachry-

mose and rueful expression, while he had not had time to dismiss the merry curl on the other side. He was particularly anxious to know, on such occasions, how long the vessel might be supposed to have a chance of going on before she foundered.

One day we sprang, or carried away, our jib-boom, and the main-stay sail came down, and great was the confusion and alarm; for I think one or two on board were not much better sailors than the excellent Minister. I believe, if the truth had been told, there were several who would have thought it an improvement if the ship could have accommodated a select few of the Royal, or any other Humane Society to restore us to life after any extent of drowning we might be subjected to. However that might be, it was a gallant and goodly company on board, and pleasant was it to hear them singing in merry chorus in the evening, when the water was comparatively calm (very much *comparatively*, I assure you), "O Susianna!" which rather whimperingly-inclined lady seems really to be "the undying one," and also the universal and ubiquitous one; for go where you may, you will hear her invoked. I am told they harpoon whales to this cheering tune in the Antarctic regions.

Then there was a right jovial parody about "Californy," too, and no end of "Uncle Neds" and "Mary Blanes," &c. But amongst them, however—which was a great want of taste in these songsters — was *not* the good old ditty with the impressive words, beginning—

"Come all ye Continentallers, I 'd have ye for to know,
That for to fight the enemy we 're going for to go."

The Americans, I think, are a very musically inclined people—far more naturally so, it strikes me, than we "Britishers." They have a very pretty custom (and they have so many, it is strange that those which are of a contrary description should ordinarily alone have been dwelt upon by travellers), and this is, of calling each other by the names of their respective States. If there be more than one from a State, I suppose by a kind of subdivision they resort to the names of their towns. If this be the case, what grandiloquent denominations some of them might come in for. "Here, Constantinople, young Nineveh wants you;" and "Pekin, call Carthage and Mesopotamia to help Alexandrianopolis and little Herculaneum." As it is, through our skylight, we heard constantly some of their beautiful State names shouted out. "Indiana, come give us a song right away, and Alabama will join." "No; it is Louisiana's

turn any how." "Where's Texas? is *he* coming on deck?" "Wall, I jist cal'late he aint a going to do nothing else: there he comes, too, with Michigan and Arkansas."

We arrived at Vera Cruz in the evening; but it was some time before we were able to land. The getting out of the "Walker" into the boat was a work of difficulty, so rough was the sea. At last, ourselves and carpet bags were dropped in, the former by some ingenious sleight of *foot*, very creditable to our activity. His Excellency and Mr. P—— had already gone on shore, and we found Mr. P——, and some other of our fellow-passengers waiting on shore to receive us and escort us to the hotel. The American Consul at Vera Cruz was so good as to take us on shore in his boat.

The glorious Orizava was only dimly visible in the distance, owing to some slight mist. The town, I thought, looked beautiful from the sea. It is the fashion to abuse Vera Cruz (no doubt its situation and climate are odious), but its sixteen grand domes and cupolas, its battlements, and picturesque buildings are very striking.

The hotel we are in is in the great "Plaza," almost close to the fine old cathedral, and opposite to the former palace, now partly used as a prison. On the other side are seen hand-

some houses, bearing severe marks of the bombardment of the city by General Scott. We found it very hot when we first came here, but rejoiced much at the speedy prospect of a norther. It came, indeed; but, alas! though to some extent we were benefited, it was at the expense almost entirely of light and liberty.

Thus it was,—instead of windows, except one tiny pane in the door, there are, as it were, large wooden gates, or very huge clumsy rough doors opening on to the indispensable balcony: when the norther blows at all severely, it is absolutely necessary to close these great portals, or your room would be full of sand; and, besides, you would be blown out of it. Therefore, we were made melancholy prisoners of, and taken into close captivity by ourselves; and, in spite of all our precautions in the night, our balcony-doors blew open, and my little girl and I were almost blown away, beds and all.

There are an enormous number of "sopilotes" here — a kind of turkey-buzzard, or vulture, or cousin-german to all three; and these are the feathered scavengers of the place. "I cal'late" they have no sinecure office, and so they occasionally appear to opine themselves, for you see the omnivorous black creatures looking very grave and contemplative,

sometimes motionless and quiet as a row of mutes, solemn and gloomy as a congregation of undertakers, and you look upon the dismal sight, and begin thinking of sextons and 'black jobs" (as I have seen funerals described in matter-of-fact England); when suddenly up goes one undertaker with a whizz, and away goes another with a whirr, to make room for a fresh set.

The castle of St. Juan d'Ulloa, which commands Vera Cruz, is built on the little island bearing the same name, about four hundred fathoms from the shore: it is said to be a strong citadel. Its north-west angle supports a light-house, with a splendid revolving light, nearly eighty feet above the sea.

The harbour is reckoned a very insecure one, the anchorage so bad that the vessels are not considered safe unless made fast to rings of brass, which are fixed for the purpose in the walls of the castle. Still, however disadvantageously situated, Vera Cruz may boast of considerable commercial importance, although, of late years, Tampico, with rather a superior port in a less unhealthy part of the coast, has been rapidly springing into consequence.

Vera Cruz was founded about the latter part of the sixteenth century, on the very spot

where Cortez first landed. There had, however, been a small town there before that event, which by Cortez himself was called "Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz." Philip III. bestowed on it the titles and privileges of a city in 1615. A French squadron took the castle in 1838, but shortly afterwards abandoned it and restored it to the Mexicans. The Americans again captured it under General Scott, and it remained in their possession till the ratification of the articles of peace.

While the foreign trade of Mexico was carried on exclusively by the *flota*, which sailed from Cadiz periodically, Vera Cruz was celebrated for its "fair," held when the ships assembled at its port; but, in 1778, the abolition of this system of regular fleets put an end to this fair, as also to the yet more famous and splendid one of Porto Bello.

The houses here seem all built in the ancient Spanish or Moorish style, ordinarily enclosing a spacious square court, with broad covered galleries. They have commonly balconies in front. The foot-paths are usually under the shelter of arcades, which is very pleasant in hot, sunny countries.

This hotel, where we meet with great civility and attention, is kept by a Scotchman,

very considerably Mexicanised—(poor man, he is in very bad health, and the climate seems to be slowly poisoning him). The housekeeper is a German, and she, on the contrary, appears to be more intensified in her nationality by the process of transplantation. She seemed perpetually in a high state of saur kraut, and utterly Teutonic. She was very kind and good-natured indeed to us, although frequently she had declined altogether, we were told, the felicity of lodging ladies in the hotel.

She explained to me, in a remarkably intelligible mixture of Mexican-Spanish, English, French, German, Indian, Scotch, and anything else that came into her head, leaving it to me to unravel them, her reasons for this occasional indisposition on her part to receive guests of her own sex.

"Mexican ladies mit ther airs muy desagradables. Von Señora, wife of a general, come here, sehr cross, sulky. No canny, I tink, head. Gone, loco. Order comida for she and de General, husband. Muy buena it was; I help cook it. Todos good, when she see it, no taste it, take it all todos up, and trose it all at cook's cabeza! There! wat you tink o' dat? The Señora got no comida, nein,—soup, frijoles, chickens, todos she trowed in

cook's cara, mit her zwei hands! And O ciel! dere was dinner, disshes, and todos on floor. De General, husband, poor man (he blind) hear noise —came to mich, say 'Muy schlecht, me can't help, he a'most cry, pobrecito! lose him dinner too. Hoot awa, a bonny Señora dat, madame."

But, if her languages were wonderful, so were her gesticulations. Impressive indeed they were. While her voice was pitched an unusual height to suit and make up for the Babel of languages in which she was constrained to utter her sentiments, she spoke with great rapidity. Suddenly she changed the scene from Mexico to Hanover, where it appeared she had been housekeeper to a gentleman who was an acquaintance of our late kind Duke of Cambridge.

"The English Herzog Cambridge," she exclaimed, "wat von good prince dat! Come von day, all out, tous, Madame, come to mich, Cambridge did"—(I think the good frau did not intend any disrespect to the royal Duke by thus familiarly speaking of him, but, not knowing what Herzog was in English, when she did not use the German word she was quite at fault). "Well, Cambridge say, tell de family I comes, eh? Ha, ha! he laugh, sehr. Good nature prince,—oui, madame, ja, always smile

and laugh. O! how unlike cross lady mit general husband."

She then proceeded to tell some wonderful stories about the Herzog, and cows and fresh milk, and a party and a country-house, *hacienda*, but the extraordinary patchwork of languages defied all comprehension,—patchwork? —nay, it was more like silks of mixed colours: German, shot with French, and that shot over again with English, and crossed with Spanish. She seized my hands every now and then as if about to give me a lift to assist the understanding, but I was in a hopeless state. There was a whirl of *haciendas* and Hanoverians, and generals, and chickens, and herzogs, and cows, &c., in one's brain; a human windmill, a living telegraph, making signs at the rate of a million a minute before me —and all was confusion and mental darkness. She continued, however, fast and furious; and the chief actor in this scene was evidently perfectly satisfied: she was exceedingly diverted, and intensely interested by her own tale. Now she seemed almost on the point of cheering herself with hearty bravos, and now she successfully melted herself almost to tears, speaking in the most pathetic accents, with clasped and wrung hands. We, not having

the most remote notion at this juncture what particular form of human grief she was representing, were at a loss to console her.

As a housekeeper she was very superior indeed, and most kind and obliging did we find her. She kept the hotel in admirable order, and seemed to be running about from morning till night. If any of the *Criadas* or *Mozos* neglected their duties, there was the detachment of Hanoverian light horse after them *instanter* —trot, trot. She had, however, an unpleasant custom of keeping part of the broad galleries that ran round the house in a perpetually flooded state, from the gigantic scale of washing operations that seemed always going on there. At times the soap-sud breakers ran so high, it was a matter of great difficulty to pass them with safety, and a small life-boat was quite a desideratum.

We walked in the Alameda yesterday evening for a short time, escorted by the American Consul here, who is a gentlemanlike and well-informed person. He served in the Mexican war, and told us many very interesting anecdotes respecting it. The Alameda is pretty enough. At the further end a fandango was going on : the music sounded rather pleasing in the distance.

Not far from this spot is the beginning of a railroad which, say the Americans, may perhaps be finished in five hundred years: it is intended to be carried on to Mexico. The streets here are wide and handsome, and clean too; thanks, probably, in great part, to the solemn scavengers I have before mentioned.

Now that the *norte* is gone, we almost live upon the balcony. From thence we saw an enormous train of packed mules the other day. It seemed almost never-ending, as it came into the Plaza: the whole place appeared alive with them, when they stopped and were collected together and unloaded. The mules looked strong and well fed; they appeared to have a few little affairs of honour to settle with their comrades on their arrival, for a variety of kicks were interchanged; and it was some time before the "party of order" gained the ascendant.

We have made acquaintance already with a number of tropical fruits through the kind care of our German friend. As yet I like none of them much. There were sapotes, bananas (those however were old acquaintances), Grenaditas di China, as they called them—mamey, and others. The living at this hotel is extremely good (though of course the cooking is Mexican); and we have certainly on no occasion thrown the

repast at our Mozo's wild Indian head. He is an extraordinary genius this same Mozo, who usually waits on us; for he actually comprehends my Spanish, and except a few very trifling mistakes, such as bringing me a jug of boiling water instead of ice, or clearing away all the things when I ask for a few more, we manage quite capitally. I am perpetually asking him for bread and potatoes, and other vegetables, and milk; for at sea we were deprived of all these pleasing articles of food, and the two latter are very good here. He seems satisfied in his own mind, as he brings fresh *pápas*, and more *leche* and *pan*, that we came from a country where cows are unknown, vegetables ungrown, and bread wholly unheard of, and that we are duly delighted with our new Mexican fare.

We have received several visits from the English Consul and his son. Mr. Gifford is good enough to give us all the necessary information with regard to our journey to Mexico, and to lend us a couple of small trunks in the place of our large ones, which he advises, for several good and sufficient reasons, should be left behind at Vera Cruz. We have been detained about a week here in consequence of the diligences being so full it was impossible to get places. After considerable difficulty, our

*asientos* are now secured. Our kind friend, the American Minister, started some time ago.

The *cortége* had altogether an imposing effect. Eight stout mules were attached to the huge carriage, and a large escort of dragoons drew up before the front of the hotel. These, I believe, a short time before the diligence started, trotted off to wait for it at the gates.

The diligencias always leave Vera Cruz about ten o'clock at night, for the heat of the day would render the journey almost insupportable, especially to the poor mules who have to drag the unwieldly vehicle through the hills of sand which cause the first part of this journey to be very wearisome and disagreeable.

We were on the balcony when the United States Minister took his departure. With him was Mr. P——, a walking arsenal and a movable powder-magazine, determined no *ladrone* should annex his goods and chattels. He said laughingly to us, "I have just thirty-seven shots to give them if they attempt to meddle with me."

His Chilian servant did not look quite so light-hearted as his master: he marched gravely behind the bushy bulwarks of his own enormous mustaches in rather a darkly contemplative mood. However, I believe (like his nation in

general), he is a right brave man, and probably, if he entertained any apprehension, it was of the gunpowder magazine inside the diligence blowing up, as such an explosion was not impossible, taking lighted cigars into account; and it would have been an unpleasant and unprofitable way of quitting existence—on the road to California too! which he and his master were.

Mr. P—— told me he has always had Chinese servants at Mazatlan, this Chilian being almost the only exception. He says they are the best servants imaginable, quick, obliging, attentive and trustworthy.

Lord M. Kerr started very shortly after his arrival here for Mexico. He rode part of the way in order to be able to stop when he chose to sketch: a Mexican guide accompanied him. He thought of taking the diligence from Jalapa, I believe, and after going for some distance by that, perhaps riding again.

The bawling the watchmen make here is astonishing and alarming. They seem to be in the habit of perpetually frightening people to death to assure them that they are safe. Imagine all the dogs of Constantinople in profound affliction and pain, and you may form some idea of the howling of Vera Cruzian *Serenos*. They have that pretty name, not certainly from

the state into which they have suddenly aroused and horribly startled the unfortunate slumberers, but because in the Mexican climate in general the state of the weather (which they have to report) is cloudlessly fine, and so they are constantly crying a yelling tempestuous *sereno:* the rest of their terrible hollabulloo, I believe, consists of the hour and "Ave Marie purissima."

We have seen some very picturesque Mexican peasants and horsemen. The women's dress with the flowing *rebosos* is very graceful. These *rebosos* are long coloured scarfs, and are crossed about in some peculiar manner which has a pretty effect. The men wear enormous hats with silver cords twisted round them, very wide trousers which are slashed up the side of the leg, and splendid serapes of many hues, which are tossed about in every imaginable shape and manner :—it seemed to me as if no two were ever worn alike. Their horse-furniture is generally very handsome, and their profusely ornamented saddles are (Dominie Sampson would say) "prodigious."

## CHAPTER II.

THE MEXICANS. — CLIMATE OF MEXICO. — LUXURIANCE OF ITS VEGETATION.—BEAUTY OF ITS FLOWERS AND BIRDS.—JALAPA. — THE JOURNEY FROM VERA CRUZ. — THE STATE OF THE ROADS. — THE DILIGENCE. — A FORMIDABLE-LOOKING PASSENGER.—CORNISH MINERS IN MEXICO.—THE INN AT PEROTÉ.—ENGLISH HARDWARE IN MEXICO. — HACIENDA OF GENERAL SANTA ANNA. — GENERAL SCOTT AND THE PASSAGE OF THE CHAPPARAL.—PUENTE DEL REY.—THE MOUNTAINS OF MEXICO. — ORIZABA. — ITS MAGNIFICENT HEIGHT. — CATHEDRAL OF PUEBLA. — MEXICAN SPURS. — RIO FRIO. — POPOCATAPETL. — NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE MEXICANS.

We have had a delightful journey from Vera Cruz, excepting always the frightful roughness of the roads. I believe, since the days of the Spanish dominion, they have never been repaired or touched. General Scott's artillery could have done them no good ; but there they remain unmended. Formerly, it is said, this road was the finest in the world. No doubt the standard was not very high in those days: Macadamization had not seen the light, and the French *pavé* had. But from the very ruins of the road you can form an idea of the former ex-

cellence of it. The loose stones lying about, over which you bound with such excruciating jolts, were originally part of a fine pavement, which every now and then, indeed, for a very short distance, you roll over, and which has withstood ruin, rain, revolutions, and that old gentleman with the sharp scythe, who, though supposed to fly, continues to leave very deep footmarks wherever he treads—and where does he not?

If the Mexicans, instead of manufacturing their three hundred revolutions since their independence, had spent the time and money devoted to these topsy-turvy useless pursuits, and busied themselves in improving their internal communications, developing the natural resources of their magnificent country, and advancing the education of the people—what might Mexico be? What might it not be at this moment? If a calculation could be made, and they could ascertain what they might have accomplished with the money and means and misdirected energies that they have applied to such worse than idle purposes, would they not regret their folly? No, not a bit, I dare say; though, but for their many internal sources of weakness, in all probability they might have successfully with-

stood the Americans, and remained in possession of California, and, in course of time, discovered what that possession implied. This might have been better and more patriotic in the end than playing at revolutions, unhinging the whole country, and upsetting everything, as if this were really a desideratum and advantage to a nation.

As to the extreme natural beauty we beheld during the almost magical journey from Vera Cruz to the capital, no words, I feel, can adequately describe it. We passed through every variety of climate, each with its own peculiar productions, with splendid snow-topped mountains crowning the scene, themselves crowned by the gorgeous magnificence of the resplendent tropical heavens. Such mornings! such sunrises! heaven and earth seemed meeting, as it were, and mingling in glory without end. Such nights! heaving and blazing with stars. Those glorious masses of stars seemed almost coming down on our little world: nearer and nearer they seemed to shine, as if drooping under the weight of their immense glory and majesty, and sinking towards us! You know what the Neapolitan ambassador said to George the Second: that the moon of the King, his master, was far better than His Majesty's sun.

I wish he had seen the stars of Mexico, which I think are not very unlike Italian moons; and her moons like great white suns, and her suns like the skies on fire. Certainly the heavens in the tropics are marvellously glorious—but earth is so beautiful here, too.

One morning, at sunrise, coming from Puebla, we saw the great mountain, Orizava, reflecting the light of the rising luminary, and looking as if it was literally made partly of gold and partly of fire, so gloriously was it beaming back those dazzling splendours from its huge crest of glittering snow. Between Jalapa and Peroté, and still more between Vera Cruz and Jalapa, the astonishing prodigality and unutterable magnificence of the tropical vegetation is perfectly overpowering! I could not have believed without beholding it, that such a Paradise remained to this world! Such colours —such blooms—such forests of flowers! Such inconceivable luxuriance of foliage and fruit! You cannot for a moment "begin to imagine" the glories of these scenes—their inexhaustible variety—their indescribable exuberance—their extraordinary and matchless brilliancy of colouring!

Nature seems like a perpetual miracle there. It made us think of the sumptuous Sultana in

the " Arabian Nights' " tales, who changed her regal dress twelve times a day. Just try to fancy in those marvellous regions endlessly-spreading colossal bowers, under a green overhanging firmament of uptowering trees,—and such bowers too! Myriads of flowers of a hundred colours, crowding coronal upon coronal; and these again intertwined and overtwined, and round and through, and sub and supertwined with others, and others still! It seemed as if there was really going to be a flood of flowers, and this was the first flow of the dazzling deluge: a gorgeous deluge indeed that would be—its own rainbow. There were innumerables roses, interwreathed with convolvoluses, flowering myrtles, aloes, cherimoyas, floripundias (a magnificent sculpture-like, bell-shaped flower), the verdant liquidamber, jessamines, and others, with creepers and parisitical plants, festooning and trailing themselves about with the very wildest luxuriance, so that often the coiled and heaped-together boughs and branches appear to bear hundreds of different sorts of leaves and flowers at once!

One of the most magnificent flowers I ever saw, grows on a tree of considerable dimensions (if, indeed, it is not a parasitical plant), and looks, with its multitudinous clusters of

large, gorgeous, and vivid scarlet blossoms, like a pyramid of planets in a blaze or a candelabra of comets, with forty thousand branching flames in all directions. These were most beautifully contrasted by the snowy white lilies I have spoken of before, which literally lined the road-side in many places.

In short, altogether, it was quite bewildering. One felt that one would fain have ten thousand eyes to see with, and ten thousand senses to admire, appreciate, and realize (I must go back to the United States for the right word) all the immensity and variety of those wondrous royal realms of Nature. I have said that the leaves, branches, flowers, fruits, stems, seemed all confusedly intermingled, and matted, and massed together in beauty. There were heaps of cactuses garlanded with wildernesses of roses; there were floripundias coiled about with creepers that seemed almost moving in their wild life-like grace; besides countless other labyrinthine complications.

But I have said nothing of the splendid birds, that like animated rainbows and winged sunbeams were darting about amid these transcendant scenes. But it is quite useless to attempt to describe these unimaginable regions,—one might as well strive to convey

in words a glorious strain of the most exquisite music.

After leaving Puebla, we mounted up so high that it became quite cold; and at Peroté, too, where we slept one night, we should have been glad of a little fire! There the vegetation was chiefly confined to pines and firs. We had extremely hot weather for the first day's journey; but we had a delightful and most refreshing rest at Jalapa, which is a place of enchantment — a little Cashmere of delights,—a very kingdom of roses. The climate is reckoned very good, and the poor Vera Cruzians fly there to take refuge from their terrible *vomito* (the dreadful Vera Cruz fever).

I think this lovely Jalapa is unlike any town I have ever seen anywhere: its houses and streets do not seem to take away the country air of everything belonging to it. In those garden-beautified, quiet, picturesque streets, you feel as far out of the hard, and stale, and work-a-day world, as if you were in the midst of a vast savanna, or the shadowy recesses of an untrodden forest. I can hardly tell why it is so, but so it seemed to me. Diligences seem to rattle there, and busy travellers to congregate in vain: all, still, appears quiet all

peaceful, and holiday-like at Jalapa. It seems, as it were, consecrated by its own beauty.

And Nature has so much to say there! Her flowery treasures fill the streets and courts with their odoriferous delights. Her glorious mountains and hills look upon you there in a hundred beauteous shapes.

We found a delightful hotel in that exquisite town, — all galleries, and balconies, and arcades, and courts; and to breathe the delicious air of balmy Jalapa alone is a pleasure. Is the reader aware that the not delicious medicine, whose name closely resembles that of this fair town, is produced from a root which grows in great profusion near it? From this place it takes its name; and as this association is not particularly charming, I prefer spelling the word in the old way, "Xalapa." What a fall from roses and floripundias, to tumble down to this nauseous drug! But I believe the flower of this same plant is a very beautiful convolvulus. Very useful it is, no doubt; and, in this utilitarian age, perhaps, more to be thought of than poor Flora's daffydowndilly treasures, and roses and posies.

The dreaded first stage from Vera Cruz, I did not find so dreary as I expected. Our escort met us at the gates of the town, and

our eight mules went gallantly on, till the deep loose sand reduced the gallop to a trot, the trot to a walk, and the walk even at times almost to a stand-still: some parts of the way we went washing the wheels of the cumbrous diligencia actually in the sea. There seemed to be no regular road just there, or if there was, the coachman evidently disregarded it, for it could not be supposed it led through the sea.

Afterwards we came to a very heavy part of the road; it seemed all the mules could do to tug us through, and a great deal of time was consumed in this slow battle with the sand.

We stopped to breakfast at a very nice pavilion-like place. There we were ushered into a very pretty airy room, where the breakfast was already prepared, on a large round table. Señor N——, a friend of the English Consul, who had been introduced to us by him at Vera Cruz, was one of our fellow-passengers. He is a member of the Mexican Congress, and appears a highly-informed person. He speaks French and English very fluently. He was exceedingly obliging, and did the honours of the diligence and the hotel admirably for us.

They have a very pretty plan in some of

these country "fondas," of putting up windows of dark blue glass, which shed a delightfully cool light through the room. This, however, is rare, for ordinarily there are no windows at all, only the great doors I mentioned before.

From Jalapa we had an American coachman, who drove extremely well; but the road was frightful. The diligences, and the hotels that they stop at, all belong to one person, a rich and enterprising Mexican gentleman, who has done much to improve the communication between Vera Cruz and the capital, and, I believe, between Mexico and Guadalajara as well, which line also belongs to him. But there is much room for further improvement.

Some of the stages are a great deal too long —above all, on such infamous roads; and while several of the hotels are exceedingly comfortable and well-conducted, others are of the most primitive description, and amply furnished with—nothing; at least, nothing that you can profitably and pleasantly make use of.

The roads are horrible. Every now and then came an unearthly jolt, that tossed us all up like shuttlecocks to the ceiling, and made one think really some drivers in despair had left their foundered waggons on the way, or General Scott some broken cannon, which we, in our

frisky diligence, had taken a flying leap over. Our involuntary flights to the ceiling and back were like the short, fluttering, up-springings of the poor pigeons of Loo, which I used to commiserate so much when hawking there: they were thrown up to attract the hawks, and then jerked back again.

At other times we felt we were dropping into a chasm, that seemed desirous of emulating the mammoth cave in dear "old Kentuck." We found we had our own heads "in chancery" sometimes, pretty nearly, and the whacks and thumps that all got were tremendous.

At length, the much-abused diligencia came to a dead stop, heart-broken—or spring-broken at any rate, as we discovered; and this accident revealed to us the astounding fact that these diligencias actually pretended to have springs, which otherwise we should not have dreamed of. We were all requested to descend, while the huge vehicle was raised and the injury temporarily repaired, by the united efforts of the coachman and an American gentleman, who was an outside passenger, on his way to California. At last we mounted the high steps, and were placed on the wheels, or "the *wheel*," again.

The spirited proprietor of these coaches

should arrange that an "experienced surgeon" should accompany them in their journeys. It might be useful practice, too, for a few young beginners—as good as walking the hospitals.

We saw a beautiful waterfall in the distance, on the way to Peroté, which Colonel A—— (a friend of Señor N——) first pointed out to us, saying it was a "Cataráta," like Niagara: the first it was, and a very pretty one; the last I must beg to be excused from admitting.

We had a steep hill not far from this place, long, but not tedious, and so just the reverse of that sermon Canning characterized as "tedious, though not long." The road on both sides was bordered with the most enchanting natural gardens of flowers of all hues. Hesperides (and of any extent) for hedges, or instead of them! Colonel A—— gathered us some delicious flowers, and our great barge on wheels looked as cheerful as the Russian trelliaged cages in which ladies at St. Petersburgh used to sit (I know not if the fashion continues) in their drawing-rooms, playing at summer and the south.

We drove on merrily, with our gallant escort galloping and prancing by the side of the stage, the flags on their lances fluttering

gaily in the wind (and themselves all *sarapes* and mustache, showing only the point of a nose, and two dark eyes in addition), and with our curious collection of articles within, such as roses and revolvers, convolvuluses and cigars, books and bowie-knives, escopétas and oranges, gunpowder and sugar-plums, fans, parasols, and pistols. I forgot to mention how our kind Hanoverian housekeeper loaded us with generous gifts of tea and sugar, and fruit, and cakes, which she good-naturedly insisted on our taking. It was rather perilous, however, to have loose parcels in the vehicle, as they were flung about in all directions; and you stood a chance now of having a tea-canister in your eye. Now a huge packet of sugar struck you on the nose, and now the basket, but not the oranges (these were acting the part of cannon-balls, and knocking people about right and left), was on the point of trying to go down your throat.

Frightful present dangers make one forget remoter perils; and the alarm occasioned by these active missiles, and also the serious terror with which we contemplated our brave defenders, made us think but little of robbers—but this requires explanation assuredly. It must be told that the passengers were superabundantly armed—they frequently declared no

danger was to be apprehended in consequence of their having such a heap of firearms amongst them, from which I begged leave to differ. Now imagine an old "escopéta" loaded, and frequently pointed at your head during the mad jumps of that lumbering and eccentric vehicle, that seemed playing with an invisible skipping-rope, and constantly catching its feet in it; a large covey of pistols performing curious circuits in the air occasionally in the hands of their valiant owners, and various other similar murderous instruments of defence, which were enough to make your hair stand on end, considering the position they placed themselves in with reference to your brains during the plungings and prancings of that wild-colt like coach.

At one of the "ventas" we took in a gentleman, who looked like the Tower of London on its travels, such an arsenal had he hung round his belt. At the first glance you might have taken him for the commander-in-chief of all the brigands in Mexico, but you would have been widely mistaken. This was a most pacifically disposed and pleasant English gentleman, Mr. G——, a superintendent of the far-famed Guanajuato mines, who had been in Mexico about twenty years without losing a jot or particle of his Eng-

lish manners, way of speaking, or appearance, although it is by no means the existing fashion in Hyde Park, or even on the North Western Railway, to hang your waist round with pistols, and other such belligerent ornaments. He told us the mines of Guanajuato (which place, we were told, the Cornwall miners, who work there, pronounce invariably "Go-and-a-quarter") have been extraordinarily productive during the last year, they having yielded, in 1849, 8,400,000 dollars, which is above half a million more than they did last year. New mines have been opened, and the improvements in the methods and machinery are said to be very extensive.

Mr. G—— told me, on the whole the preference was perhaps to be given to native workmen over those from Cornwall, in consequence of the latter being so addicted to drinking, and to quarrelling with one another—at least in Mexico. Already, round Guanajuato there are more than a hundred mines, and nearly eighty thousand workmen are employed.

When we arrived at Peroté, I was rather terrified at the first aspect of the *méson;* but presently reflected it was of course only the mules' stables we saw, and I felt consoled for a brief space of time; but, on descending from

the diligence, what was my consternation to find that those rough-looking stalls which I was rather compassionating the poor mules for having to inhabit, were destined to be our apartments! They were almost exactly in size and everything else like rudely-built loose horse-boxes, the chief difference being that there were small beds instead of straw in them, and a very little table fastened against the wall, with a couple of mouldy-looking chairs. Window there was none of any sort or kind.

Notwithstanding the rugged appearance and appointments of our quarters, they gave us a very good dinner (after stoutly refusing to let us have anything unless we went to the public table, which I declined, and almost while still reiterating "Nada, nada! no es posible!" they brought it), and a very civil *muchacha* waited on us. All the plates and dishes at all the *mésons* we stopped at on our way from Vera Cruz to Mexico, have the eagle and nopal (the arms of Mexico) on them, and inform the hungry traveller, in very conspicuous characters, that they belong to the service of the *diligencias generales*, and all of them are made in busy England, expressly for this line. That sweet little island of ours, as we know, likes to have a finger in every pie and pie-dish!

We saw an immense *conducta* during our journey. A vast number of mules were carrying silver from the mines to the coast. It was a very gay and pretty and interesting sight. It seemed as if there was a whole regiment of soldiers escorting the specie-burthened mules.

Peroté is reckoned a sort of metropolis of the *ladrones*. It is said the diligence has on several occasions been pillaged at the very gates of this gloomy and wild-looking town. We came at a very fortunate time. About a week before, a diligence had been stopped and plundered, and the brigands were taken and suffered capital punishment. This had, of course, struck terror into the rest for the time, and, with a strong escort, we felt very secure, except from the six shooters and *escopétas* of our friends.

The specimen we had of the latter weapon might have figured in a museum, as an antique, with credit to itself, and less danger to others, than loaded and in a loaded diligence: it looked horrible, really, in the hands of a raw inexperienced Spanish youth, who, with his brother, had just arrived from Spain, to settle in Mexico—with some relation, I believe. It probably dated from about the time of the great Spanish Armada.

It appeared to me they allow the diligencia travellers any amount of dawdling-time that they require. Sometimes, when the mules were all ready, the greater part of the passengers would be lounging about with their cigars, keeping the rest of the "gentle public" waiting: when it suited their pleasure, the agreeable sound "vamos, caballeros" was heard, and, ere long, we were off. I must confess, however, it is very likely at these times the stage may have been a little before its time, and this was the reason the "caballeros" were allowed to stretch their cramped limbs for a little longer period.

I ought to have mentioned before, that we passed a fine-looking *hacienda*, or *quinta*, that belonged to General Santa Anna. It had a deserted melancholy appearance; but whether it still is his property or no, I know not. It is between Vera Cruz and Jalapa; and, I believe many other *haciendas* between those two places are, or were, his. We also came by the famous battle-field of Cerro Gordo.

The American whom I mentioned before (and who was a very gentlemanlike, intelligent person, with very quiet manners, though bristling with arms like a fortress) pointed out to us the field on which he had fought. He

gave us an animated account of the battle; and so near the spot, and described *vivâ voce*, it was very interesting. So well too did he tell his tale of war that we were fain to shoulder our very parasols in martial sympathy. He told how General Scott had cleared the passage through the Chapparal, making a circuit of a few miles, and thus gaining the side of the hill that looked to the north-east, the most easy of access, and which it appeared, was not so well defended as the rest. The hill has two peaks.

General Scott gained one, and the American forces charged down the slope and up the steep in front of them, "even where the deadliest of War's death-bolts showered" from the thundering batteries of the foe. The battery was taken, and the cannons played against the retreating Mexicans, who, broken and disordered, fled impetuously through the Chapparal. Santa Anna with some difficulty effected his escape.

Cerro Gordo itself is a mere Indian village, of transparent-looking cane huts. Paul Pry need not "drop in" to such dwellings to see all that is going on in the household.

We passed by the ruins of a very fine stone bridge across the river, near Plan del Rio, an-

other assemblage of bamboo huts, which was burned by Santa Anna on the advance of "Los Yankees." This bridge, we were told, the Mexicans blew up, hoping thus to stop General Scott's artillery. Others say, it was to hinder the passage of an American specie train, *en route* from Vera Cruz. In six hours after this destruction was completed, Los Yankees had, with their usual quickness and ability, made a capital road across the chasm, which not only answered their purpose at the time, but which remains to answer that of ours, and all other travellers; for the sacrificed bridge has never been restored by the Mexicanos.

Puente Nacional, formerly "Puente del Rey," is in a savagely beautiful glen, through which the river sparkles and dashes in its passage to the Gulf. Rivers are very rare in Mexico, and there are no large ones in the country.

I have said nothing yet of the Coffre di Peroté. It is 13,514 feet high, and its crest is distinguished by a mass of rock, that is shaped much like a chest, from which the mountain takes its name. I did not very much admire this same Coffre di Peroté: what is it, compared with glorious, unmatched, unmatchable Orizaba? In Mexico you become quite *difficile* about your mountains; you pick and choose,

select, reject. The ten thousand footer on this side seems like a mere upstart mushroom of a mountain, and the eight thousand feet high hobble-de-hoy on that side is really a ridiculous little molehill, a Tom Thumb on tiptoes, looking tall with all its might, but a poor dwarf after all. As to the clouds upon it, they must be mere grovellers of clouds, very much addicted to low company, to hover so much about it: mountain indeed! We will perhaps allow it to be something like the lofty artificial garden-mounds in a Chinese picture, which the lady, with her little club foot slightly raised, is going to step over with such careless ease.

But now, Orizaba, come into court; let us have a look at you. Majestic Orizaba, thou art indeed magnificent! What is there in the world like thee? standing alone, and thus in thy "single blessedness" towering to thy mighty height of seventeen thousand eight hundred feet! (Some writers give it eighteen thousand feet. It is said to be the only mountain of equal height on the earth that thus rises detached and apart from all others in its lofty solitude, communing with only heaven.) Thou "star-mountain," with the dazzling summit of perpetual snows, so pure

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and cold, and bright, in the face of the burning sun of the tropics! How beautiful are the girdling forests of cedars and pines, and other trees that adorn the giant sides of that consummate Orizaba.

At Puebla I was sorry not to see the inside of the Cathedral; which, to judge from the exterior, must be well worth a visit. It is considered by the Pueblanos to be partly of angelic architecture—and well did the celestial stone-masons do their work.

Puebla was called on this account "Puebla da los Angeles." The mortal workmen must have felt a very mortal jealousy of these winged labourers; but history says not whether in consequence of diminished wages, there was any strike. Naturally (or supernaturally), the immortal builders left their earthly competitors far behind, both in the rapidity and perfection of their work. This superstition is, of course, chiefly confined to the Indians.

We were too much charmed with the peace and quiet of our hotel to stir out that evening. Certainly the luxury of not bounding about like an Indian rubber ball, banging your head against the hard coach, and wrenching your hands almost off in the vain effort to steady yourself, can only be appreciated by those

who have been tossing on the stormy surface of that great highway from Vera Cruz for some days. Puebla is a very large town, and a handsome one; it has an immense population of spurs, cloaks, sombreros, and rebosos (for we could see but little of the enveloped wearers), which perpetually paraded the streets.

We saw some most beautiful spurs of wrought silver for sale at one of the places we stopped at: the workmanship was exquisite. The spurs were not quite the size of a waggon-wheel (without the rim), but might, perhaps, on a pinch, serve in that capacity. The would-be sellers of them brought them to the window of the diligence, to tempt us. We admired them very much—not their size, but the extreme beauty of the designs, which were most delicately executed upon them. All praised, but none purchased: peradventure though a present of sharp spurs might have been a good hint to the worthy gentlemen who sometimes deign to interest themselves in the temporal affairs of travellers (and to relieve them from the troublesome charge of that plague, baggage—a good hint that they were welcome to use them and make themselves scarce at their earliest convenience), yet it would have hardly been worth our while to encumber our-

selves with these huge articles, in order to lay them at the feet, and fix them on the heels, of these gallant gentlemen.

The name of the place where those beauties were offered us for sale has slipped my memory; but well do I remember the road which followed. Indeed, it was sufficient to have jogged any memory in the world. To this day it is to me a mystery how we ever arrived alive at this city of Montezuma. Instead of being a road to this beauteous place, it would seem to be a succession of barriers and obstacles expressly designed to keep you from it.

When the tribulation of jolting had a little subsided, and people began picking up their parcels and packages, a fresh trial awaited us: it was a sort of dust ordeal now that we had to pass through. "Hombre! que polvo! dispense. V. Caballero, Sirvase V. levantar los vidrios." "Si, Señora, con mucho gusto," and up went the windows on both sides, but soon to come down again, for it was too hot, full as the carriage was, to keep them closed long. Oh, what a dust was that! Methinks I shall never hear people talk, or see them write of the dust of their ancestors with patience again—it will seem so disrespectful to compare them to such an unmitigated

nuisance. Such dust, and such quantities of it! Had it been gold dust, we might have become very valuable freight before we drove into the court-yard of the Casa di Diligencias here. As it was we might have had a good crop of Magveys in the "coche," or any thing we pleased, for we had become quite landed proprietors of the soil, so deeply spread was it over our large light shawls and various habiliments.

Rio Frio was the last breakfasting-place we stopped at, and here it began to rain, while the travellers were devouring their rice "guesados," "frijoles," and chocolate. Presently out rushed Mr. —— in great haste, leaving his "Almuerzo," with a huge umbrella opened, and consternation in his countenance; but it was not to protect from the rain yonder *muchacha* with the black streaming hair, nor certainly that decrepit old dame with the tattered *reboso*. No: it was for the precious pistols exposed on the box-seat (or rather what is called the *pescante*) to the storm; having carefully placed the big umbrella upon these sweet little pets, he returned to his repast, with a clear conscience. The welcome drops began to patter down fast; however, soon it became rather too much of a good thing, and

the day became chilly and clouded. It is said, though, at Rio Frio it is always cold, and almost always windy; it was both that morning.

I trembled for the view — the "hermosissima vista"—of Mexico and its vast valley of enchantment—that glorious valley, which is about a hundred miles in extent, and a whole world of beauty and magnificence, and fertility in itself! We had seen a splendid sunrise, and had a grand view of Popocatapetl, this morning, but, *l'appetit vient en mangeant*, and we were longing to gaze at sundown on the valley of valleys, with its stupendous guardian chain of encircling mountains, its majestic capital, with a thousand domes, and towers, and terraces, in the centre; its lakes like glittering sheets of silver; and all the glories that those amongst our fellow-passengers, who had been there before, described with great and vehement enthusiasm and rapture.

In mentioning Popocatapetl, I ought not to have neglected the other grand volcano, Iztaccihuatl, for they are not very far from each, and do not affect a surly solitude like that sturdy old bachelor, Orizaba. "Iztaccihuatl," or the "White Lady," might seem

to be the fair and gracious bride of stately "Popocatapetl."

Not a word have I said about Malinche, another but a smaller volcano. It is said to be about thirteen thousand feet high, and is a very majestic mountain. The name is the Aztec alteration for Marianna, the beauteous Indian wife of Cortez. Then, of Cortez himself, and of his battle-fields, I have said nought, nor of the wonderful Pyramid of Cholula, with its splendid and titanic terraces marked out against the sky—that marvellous work of the marvellous Aztecs.

One word of the people in this loveliest of all countries, or that vast accumulation of *sarapes* and whiskers, which I presume to be the people. They would appear, to judge by the outward man, or rather the outward mantle and moustachios, to be a ferocious and mysterious set of personages, but I believe they are neither one nor the other; a little treacherous, perhaps, and a little choleric occasionally, fond of *pronunciamentos*, and *pulque*, *au reste*, full of contempt for all foreigners, whom they call disdainfully "Los Gringos" (except their first cousins, the Spaniards, who are nicknamed "Los Gachupinos"), and superlatively so, it strikes me, as far as I have yet

seen, for their conquerors the Yankees. They —that is at least the prouder and richer classes of Mexico, appear generally to mention them with a kind of sneering shrug, which seems to say "hombre! we *could* have beaten them; *but*, only in short—the Stars were more in fault than we!"

I think the Americans have done good to the country and the people in some respects. I should be inclined to believe that there is now a greater craving for education, a deeper sense of its desirableness and necessity, than before the war. I am told great numbers of young Mexicans of good family go to the United States now to be educated, and they will come back, of course, with vastly enlarged minds, exalted views, and developed powers of intellect.

## CHAPTER III.

MEXICO WHEN FIRST CONQUERED.—CORTEZ AND MONTEZUMA.—THE MUSICAL GENTLEMAN.—MEXICAN PLANTS AND FLOWERS.—THE CATHEDRAL IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.—ARRIVAL OF THE DILIGENCE AT THE HOTEL.—THE PASSENGERS.—M. DE ZURUTUZA.—APPOINTMENTS OF THE HOTEL.—MEXICAN PRONUNCIAMIENTOS.—THE MEXICAN LADY AND HER FLOWERS.—THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT BEST SUITED FOR MEXICO.—THE STREETS OF MEXICO.—THE PASSENGERS AND VEHICLES.—THE SHOPS.—REBOSOS AND SARAPES.—PICTURESQUE COSTUME OF THE MEXICANS.

It was not possible to roll along the broad causeway leading to Mexico,—that causeway made, if I am correctly informed, by the ancient Indians, and not think of the days of old, when along that magnificent road marched the hosts of Cortez in their pride and power—the gallant Spanish chivalry — while before their wondering eyes rose the city of ten thousand enchantments, the unspeakably beautiful Tenochtitlan, like the capital of the Eastern King of the Genii, spreading over and covering its beautiful islands, with its palaced streets, that swarmed with gay canoes—its temples, its groves, its

floating gardens, its crystal seas, covered with barques (those majestic lakes which are now so diminished and reduced), and all its unimaginable beauties of art and nature,—all that unrivalled valley-world which, shut out from the rest of earth, scarcely seems to belong to that earth—fenced and walled round by its glorious giant mountains, leaning their snowy-helmed foreheads against the stars, and reflecting themselves in those silver waters, as if they repented of leaving such a scene of enchantment, and thus returned and haunted it ever.

What a vision must this have been to the eyes of the Spanish conqueror, and those of his adventurous followers, when, too, they saw the splendid procession advancing from the gates of the glorious city to meet them—the mighty monarch of the Aztecs, the imperial Montezuma, surrounded by his court, his richly appareled chieftains; in short, as says one of the old Spanish writers, about two hundred nobles of the royal blood, "vestidos di libréa con grandes penachos conformes en la hechura y el color.....descalzos todos y sin levantar los ojos de la tierra, acompañamiento con apariencias de procesion ;.....y se vió á los lejos una gran tropa de gente mejor adornada y de mayor dignidad en cuyo medio venia Montezuma

sobre los hombros de sus favorecidos, en unas andas de oro bruñido, &c. !" Montezuma himself, with "el semblante magestuoso con algo de intencion. Su trage un manto de *sutilisimo algodon*," finest cotton !—though there were no Manchester mills in existence, and not a spinning jenny to help them. "Trahia sobre si differentes joyas de oro, perlas, y piedras preciosas en tanto numero, que servian mas al peso, que al adorno," &c.

This probably the Spaniards thought, and kindly in their own minds resolved to relieve him of such a cruel weight, and any of his friends and followers who were similarly inconvenienced. Then on approaching nearer, they saw the mighty Emperor of the Aztecs descend from his resplendent palanquin (canopied with glittering and many-coloured decorations of featherwork) and advance to meet the Spanish commander, leaning on the arms of two of his relations, the Lords of Tezcuco and of Iztacpalapan.

In coming from Vera Cruz you do not enter Mexico by the most beautiful approach, and we had unfavourable weather; at least the enormous volumes of dust, like the columns of sand in the Desert, hid the greater part of the sublime prospect from our eyes. Still, here

and there we had glimpses of its almost supernatural beauty, and of the majesty of those mountains, which seem so jealously to surround it, and shut in all that fairy land of loveliness, that seems a "locked, and guarded, and a treasured thing." Around those giant heights clung light fleecy clouds. As to the exceeding enchantment of what even those glimpses revealed, it is indescribable; yet M. de Lamartine *might* do it justice (he only has pourtrayed Constantinople in fitting, living words), or Eothen.

Everybody seemed intensely delighted to be at last near this Queen of Cities. One cigar-loving Mexican gentleman, who seemed very pensive all day, and reduced by the awful shaking and jolting, and the dust, and the after-storm of mire, to the merest remains of a powder-puff, a jelly, an expiring whiff of tobacco, and a splash of mud, suddenly picked himself up, and put himself together again, and began actually to sing for very joy (it was a very quavering strain, I confess, as if the voice had not got over the rough treatment it had received): he was very like a musical box tuned up and set a-going mechanically, for he never ceased this strain for a moment,—the time was unaltered, the expression the same, or rather the non-expression; and this long series of *shakes* continued,

neither lower nor higher, quicker nor slower, uninterruptedly to be poured forth till we stopped at the hotel.

I with my little party had been fortunate in one respect, for we had had one side of the *coche* secured comfortably to ourselves. I heard an amusing answer to a remark that was made one day—that our danger was greater from within than from without (with a glance at the loaded blunderbusses), "No tiene V. cuidados, no hay *mucho* peligro!"—"Do not fear; there's not *much* danger."

I admired exceedingly, as we drove along, the beautiful Arbol de Peru, with its graceful branches, and some very singular cactuses, called, I am told, *organos* from their remarkable resemblance to the barrels of an organ. These were formed into extremely beautiful hedges, most artistically arranged, so as to grow in the shape of gigantic festoons, the tallest being very high. They make a formidable fence too, thickly set with prickles, almost as good, or as bad, as a *chevaux de frise*. There were some Brobdignagian aloes too (the Maguey), with leaves about a dozen feet long.

In coming to the hotel, we drove past the majestic old cathedral, situated in a most

magnificent plaza, and another fine church, on crutches, as it were, so was it propped and held up, while its huge form seemed leaning over the street very threateningly. This was the work of the sharp earthquake which had nearly destroyed the city some years ago. People say, that, if it had lasted two minutes longer, all Mexico would have toppled over. (So it really must have been a little worse than our diligencia-quakes.) We saw other traces and symptoms of that terrible visitor, as we rolled heavily along, behind our handsome team of large powerful Yankee horses, who quickly dragged us through the noble and populous streets, over which, already, the shades of evening were beginning to settle; and soon our fortification on wheels rolled into the court-yard of the Casa di Diligencias, and capitulated at discretion.

The doors were thrown open, we made a movement to get out—huge volumes of dust rolled out of the doors,—hidden awhile from mortal eyes and each other in these floating shrouds, we descended like so many Apollos and Minervas from the clouds, and still enwrapped *in* them. The living musical box, enveloped in mystery, seemed suddenly to come to the end of its mechanical melodies, and, clapping on its huge

sombrero, gave a jump out of the vehicle, that must have broken all the springs and works in its body, and vanished. (*Nota Bene.*—This same musical box was pleasing and well-bred, and a very good specimen of a polished Mexican.) The different passengers evaporated different ways, and we found waiting to congratulate us on our safe arrival, by the side of the diligence, our friends Lord M. Kerr, and Mr. P—, the latter buttoned up to the chin, not without some reason, for the evening air was chilly; and I have found since, the mornings and evenings are a little coldish in Mexico—at least at this time of the year, yet not assuredly nearly so much so as in the spring in England. In the daytime it is quite warm.

I found Mexico so fashionably full, that we could get no room of any sort or kind at the Casa de Bazar, where I had intended to go (it having been recommended to me), but we are very comfortable here. This hotel is the property of the Diligence-king of Mexico, who is master of about a hundred or more, I suppose. M. de Zurutuza is immensely rich, and has lately, I understand, purchased a magnificent estate, for which he gave an enormous price, but he still keeps on his hotel. Of course the superintendence of it is entirely given up to a

Prime Minister, who administers the affairs with great zeal and discretion.

There is a capital housekeeper too, who showed us a splendid suite of apartments the other day (M. de Zurutuza being away) which are reserved for the proprietor. They are luxuriously furnished: some are hung with pictures, others with very fine French and English engravings. There is a superb pianoforte there, on which we were graciously invited by the *femme de charge*, to play whenever we liked.

Mr. —— called the day after we arrived. He apologized, as he ought to do, for having no pretty little *pronunciamientos* to show us just at this moment, which seems extraordinary, as there is, it is well-known, usually a running revolution going on in Mexico—perhaps they are taking breath a little, after the American war.

This national sport is generally not quite so dangerous as steeple-chases or fox-hunting, and far less so than bull-fighting. It is described as an amusing little *divertissement* enough, and the pop-gunning and cannonading must have a lively and festive effect.

Altogether, the political horizon seems to be very calm and clear just now, though there

was a very pretty and promising little rebellion got up at Puebla about ten days ago, which was blighted in the bud, and one here about the same time, that burst like a bubble, or a "biler" on the Mississippi. The one at Puebla broke forth rather tamely, and came to an untimely end—it committed suicide, perhaps, with a precocious squib, or an inconsiderate cracker.

It really seems to be the native land of revolutions, there having been about three hundred and thirty, large and small, since the War of Independence. Here the doctrine of compensation is apparent; people cannot be allowed to live in such a paradise for nothing. We may go on and enjoy our jog-trot peace and quiet at home in our misty little island; we have to keep our windows shut, to exclude the fog and chilling dropping rain: it would be hard to have them broken open by drizzling cannon balls, and rather expensive too, though glass is cheap. We want a good roof over our heads, to prevent rude Boreas from visiting us; to have it summarily blown off by a shell would be a double hardship in our bitter clime. So we have the blessings of order, as maintained by our metropolitan and rural police; and of britannia

warming-pans, and coal-scuttles: and the non-blessings of fog, ice, snow, clouds, east winds, and unripe gooseberries. They have glorious suns and balmy airs, and mighty mountains and dazzling stars, gold and purple skies, a silver earth, and insurrections of every pattern and species, a large assortment always on hand, agreeably diversified by numerous little stabbings and killings, by undisciplined amateurs; for the regular *pronunciamiento* must be quite a profession in Mexico, by all accounts, and is conducted on principles of high art.

However, it is liable to abuses, as everything else is, and they say if the little boys want to rob an apple-stall, they get up a small *pronunciamientito*, and call, "Viva General Santa Anna," or anybody else, to strike terror into the soul of the *Manzana*-seller, and, as they hope, to make President Herrera shake in his chair, and then they rush on to the charge, and divide their apples of discord in peace. Such a Brummagem *pronunciamiento* as that, it would not be worth while to see; but as there are so many English and foreigners in the city, the Mexicans really should get up scientifically this characteristic little national spectacle for their amusement and edification—though, perhaps, a spontaneous growth is better: forced, like early

asparagus, these interesting little insurrections might be possibly insipid.

Talking of revolutions, I was told a tale of a lady at Puebla, who had some beautiful flowers on her balcony, and who neglected them during the civil war, a week ago (we came through as it was dying off, I believe, but we were rather sleepy and did not find it out at all). She left them for nearly three days, and then, afraid that they would be quite spoilt, in spite of the peppering balls that fell round faster than usual (the popular tempest, just going to clear off perhaps for a few weeks or so, was expending its last strength fitfully), out she stepped, on her fair balcony, armed with a watering-pot,—not so bad a weapon after all, if it could have held enough,—and proceeded to refresh the unlucky flowers, some of which had had their heads carried off by bullets, while several were bearing scars like the very flowers of chivalry. She watered them pretty fast, you may be sure, but before she had done, bang came a great ball, and cut in two the body of a flower-pot. That was enough; away ran the lady at once, thinking that the flowers had better be killed than herself.

Some contemplative persons would say the people would be happier than they are now, under a mild, paternal, unmistakeable despot-

ism, and it is rumoured that the army and the church would have no objection to furnish them with the said despotism on reasonable terms. But then each individual general and priest would patriotically wish to serve the public in the capacity of autocrat, and take the trouble off his fellow-creatures' hands. But I am against all plans of this sort, and anything that might disturb that just equilibrium of compensation I have adverted to. The people would be too happy positively; they would all turn to musical boxes, like my diligence friend, and go whistling and piping away all their lives, too full of ecstasy, perhaps, to work or think—crazed with very bliss in this Eden of the earth.

If you were to give them the mighty Nicholas, and his firm, strong, temperate government, — for such it is, — the consequences might be frightful. A whole people, perhaps, lightheaded from very light-heartedness, too happy for anything; a nation in a long delirium of joy; intoxicated with felicity. Besides, they would be the envy of the whole world (with their climate, their country, all their advantages, and no daily battles), and thus hated of all. No; they *ought* to have a little share of the trials of mortals, or the in-

habitants of the rest of this earth would feel it unfair indeed! The Presidentship, held for a short term of years, must be a fruitful source of jealousy and quarrelling in general, except in the United States; but they are an extraordinary people, there, and it will not do to step in a giant's footsteps, unless you are somewhere about the same size, and with a nearly equal length of limb; unless this is the case, there is a great chance of the one who makes the attempt coming upon his nose.

I should think that the good people here (who, without being as capable of self-government as the calm, thoughtful, shrewd, resolute Yankees are intelligent and sensible) would be far happier if they would first take care to get a very good President, and then take care to keep him as long as he lives; and instead of changing state-postilions at relay-stations only a short way apart—go on (as Eothen, I think, says of marriage,)—Vetturini-wise along to the end of their journey,—at all events as far as *he* can take them,—and the next generation may find a new one.

The streets here look wonderfully gay, almost always like Naples on a holiday, so crowded, and so brilliant, though the people are generally, I think, more serious and taciturn

from the little I have seen of them, than the Neapolitans. But there are such multitudes of them, and such quantities of carriages of various kinds, from the London brougham or the Paris britska to the most charming original, aboriginal, indescribable, huge nondescripts, drawn by astonished looking mules, that do not so much seem to be trying to drag them, as attempting to race away from them with might and main, utterly scared; * and they really look as if they were about to topple over, and crush everything near them. *Gare!* get out of the way, ye very mountains, for the runaway old globe seems taking a gallop—a world on wheels.

In the days when Montezuma or Guatamozin was emperor, the Lord Mayor of Tenochtitlan might have gone to his Guildhall in such an awful equipage, in his full dress, thatched all over with feathers, and with a couple of Aztec Gogs and Magogs standing behind as footmen. However comfortable and convenient as a carriage, a brougham or clarence may be, it looks almost like a dapper piece of imperti-

* Since I wrote this I have seen the same idea in Mr. Taylor's charming book "El Dorado":—he must forgive the apparent plagiarism. It may, perhaps, serve to show how exact was his description.

nence by these time-honoured venerable vehicles. But, Shades of all the Aztecs, what comes there? A New York omnibus, as large as life. Retire, gentlemen shades, at once, as I should have done, from the window, had I had one, and had I seen the sight from there. As it was, it was from the glass of Mr. ——'s handsome English brougham that I beheld it, and altogether I could hardly believe in Aztec chiefs or Indian emperors any more that day. An omnibus with "Fourth Avenue" on it.

The streets, as I have said, are the gayest in the world, perhaps. They are generally very broad and clean. The *portales* are charming inventions: you have a wide corridor supported on handsome stone arches, with very brilliant shops on the solid side, and the spaces between the supporting pillars are gaily filled with a vast variety of stalls, where you may buy little trays, playthings, dazzling sarapes of all colours, flowing rebosos, mangas, tortillas *ad libitum*, tilmas (Indian cloaks), dulces (sweetmeats), pictures, little figures of saints, prints, shoes, and many other miscellaneous articles.

The fruit-sellers exhibit their tempting piles of zapotes, cocoa nuts, and all sorts of fruit, from the Tierra Caliente, at the corners, and

they display too an immense number of glasses and cups filled with cool and refreshing beverages to arrest the steps of the passer-by, heated, perhaps, by walking in the sun, before he came under those delicious places of refuge from sun, wind, or rain; the first the most frequently making those portales desirable promenades. As I have seen them do at Naples, in the busy and stirring Strada Toledo, so in Mexico do the various tradesmen constantly pursue their occupation in the open air—that is to say, open here—save and except the umbrageous shelter of the covered porticoes. Of course, here are to be seen innumerable *rebosos* and *sarapes*, kaleidoscopically diversified in both patterns and colours; a marvellous and almost endless variety of both, and also in the manner of draping them about the person. Look at that little urchin of perhaps six summers, with about a mile of glittering *sarape* wound around him, like a long, huge shining snake wreathing about his small person; not, however, having caught that strutting little six-year-old in its gleaming coils, but being scornfully clutched and grasped and scotched (not killed,—for it looks living in its spiral serpentining grace—as living as the snake wound round Laocoon, which is saying

a very great deal !) — and, in short, tossed and thrown about at his will and pleasure; and *how* he stalks, *how* he attitudinizes, how he haughtily paces along (stepping like a young panther) with his splendid prey and prize; how he gives the brilliant folds another proud toss over his shoulders,—and methinks now he has chosen *his* fashion and mode and manner of wearing the magical *sarape* for ever and aye, uncopied and uncopiable. A Mexican and his *sarape* seem one and indivisible, like the ancient Centaurs and their horses, — inseparable and the same. The whole dress is very graceful; what a horror is a swallow-tailed coat in comparison, and the crown of all the hideousness of modern European dress — the tight black hat; how frightful is it by the picturesque sombrero, with its delicate silver cords and hanging tassels. They sometimes have the cord fastened by some little silver wrought bird or animal, exquisitely finished.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE CATHEDRAL OF MEXICO. — THE GRAND PLAZA. — THE PALACE. — IMPORTUNITY OF BEGGARS. — SITE OF THE CATHEDRAL ONCE OCCUPIED BY THE GRAND AZTEC TEMPLE. — DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE BY OLD SPANISH WRITERS. — THE INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL. — THE CALENDAR STONE OF THE AZTECS. — THE STONE OF SACRIFICES. — THE AZTEC PRIESTS AND THEIR VICTIMS. — THE IDOL WORSHIPPED. — THE NATIONAL MUSEUM. — COLOSSAL STATUE OF CHARLES IV. OF SPAIN. — ARMOUR OF CORTEZ AND PEDRO DE ALVARADO. — "EL SALTO DE ALVARADO." — ANCIENT MAP OF MEXICO. — BEAUTY OF THE CITY. — THE SHOPS AND THEIR MULTIPLICITY OF ARTICLES. — MEXICAN HORSE FURNITURE. — MEXICAN HOUSES. — THE PLAZA DEL TOROS.

We started to see the magnificent cathedral, wearing as usual, our *gringos* bonnets; Mr. P—— told us we should haply not be admitted in that head-dress; but being already accoutred, and inclined to think he was possibly in error, we continued on our way, resolved to try our fate.

When we came into the Grand Plaza, a little doubt and hesitation came over us. What streams of *rebosos* and mantillas were going in and out of the building,—not one bonneted head anywhere! Should we go on or turn

back? One must have something on the head —simply unbonneting would not do. In deliberating mentally on the difficulty, and giving it due earnest consideration, I was disposed to believe, that our wearing bonnets, or no bonnets, then and there, would scarcely be regarded in the light of an ecclesiastical subject, or occasion an ecclesiastical controversy; that Protestants like us, if once allowed the enjoyment and free use of our abominable heretical heads, might, without doubt, put anything upon them we chose; and that if an Inquisition had still existed, and we had been given over to its tender mercies, the bonnet question would have easily been put to an end, by the heads that wore them being "put down" at once by the inflexible Sir Peter Laurie of that stern tribunal. So the bonnets were retained, and we leisurely and calmly crossed the stately Grand Plaza, one of the finest I ever beheld in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America.

The whole of its vast space is uninterruptedly open, save by the twofold avenue of orange-trees in front of the cathedral. The noble equestrian statue of Charles IV. at one time stood in the centre, but, since the Independence war, it has been taken from its high position, and placed in the court-yard of the

Museum, where, in these revolutionary days, it might have a select society of statues of deposed kings to accompany it and have a friendly ride together. The splendid national palace covers nearly the whole of the eastern side of the Plaza (it has a princely frontage of five hundred feet); while the vast cathedral, with a very handsome church contiguous to it, which has a beautifully sculptured front, occupies the northern side: it is said they are going to pull this church down. Around the other sides a Cortal runs, whose noble arches exhibit an immense profusion of heterogeneous articles for sale.

We were assailed by many beggars and *léperos* near the Cathedral. I had not then learnt the recognized and proper method of dismissing them, if you are not inclined to encourage their laziness, by giving them any *reales* or *quartillos*. This is by saying, "Perdone V. por Dios," or "Perdone V. Hermano;" but I improvised a very efficient substitute in my own sturdy Anglo-Saxon, which, after a few repetitions, I can recommend as answering the purpose thoroughly. "Pray go away, I've nothing for you,"—a thousand signs and gesticulations, to make me understand he wants money. "You had better go away,"—

he mutters some thing: looks perplexed ;—"Don't stand there in the pathway,"—he can stand the strange gibberish no longer, and moves away discomfited. The effect is very lasting, too! I don't think the same *lépero* ever attacked me again. They seemed to have a sort of fear that the heretic might have been pronouncing some dreadful words of sorcery or witchcraft, and in short, that they had better avoid any further communication.

How beautiful the Plaza looked that morning in the glorious sunshine, with its picturesque crowds of monks, priests (with their enormous shovel hats, over the spacious brims of which you might almost drive a carriage and four), soldiers, country people, veiled señoras, Indians, *forçats* in chains, horsemen, laden mules, &c.! It was impossible not to be struck with the scenes and living actors grouped and lounging about it.

The cathedral is built upon the site of a portion of the ruins of the grand Aztec temple, that vast pyramidal edifice which was supposed to be founded by Ahuitzotli. This was the enormous idol-temple, which so astonished the Spanish conquerors by its size and magnificence. Its various piles of buildings, and courts, and sanctuaries, and halls, occupied, according to their

statements, the whole of the ground on which the cathedral now stands; and in addition, part of the plaza, and even the circumjacent streets! The old writers expatiated on the wonderful assemblage of five hundred dwellings within its enclosure,—on the mighty hall constructed of stone and lime, and adorned with dreadful serpent-forms, writhing and hideous, in stone. There were four huge gates, facing the four cardinal points of the great court, paved with stone; there were grand flights of stone stairs, and splendid sanctuaries, which were dedicated to the dreadful god of war. Then there was a vast square for their mystic dances, and educational establishments for the priests, and "genteel Ladies' Seminaries" for the priestesses.

There was a temple of mirrors (which for the sake of their studies we should, perhaps, hope was not adjoining the latter structures), and another of fair shells, and a frightful and terrible one, whose door was a giant serpent's great gaping mouth (possibly to frighten the priestesses away from the pavilion of looking-glasses next door—*quien sabe?*) Then there were beauteous fountains, where consecrated waters glittered in the sun, making sweet music; and richly-coloured bright starry birds,

such as abound in radiant Mexico, kept for sacrifice: and there was the house especially designed for the emperor's devotions; and the lovely bowers and gardens for the "holy flowers"—the scarlet manitas, I suppose (the centre of which is formed like a hand with the fingers slightly bending inwards), and,—terrible transition from the fairest and sweetest things in Nature to all that is most ghastly and loathsome—there, too, stood the grinning Towers of Skulls.

Yes! there rose the horrible skull-towers, actually built of that portion of the skeletons of the victims sacrificed to their monster idols. In that stupendous temple, they tell us, chanted night and day, at least five thousand priests in the service of their barbarous false divinities, who were anointed three times a day with perfumes of the most precious and costly description. They tell us, too, that the most devout of these priests were dressed in garments of sable hue, their flowing locks stained deeply, with some sort of ink, and their persons carefully bedaubed with a rather curious kind of cosmetic, made of the ashes of burnt scorpions and spiders. Whether this was done to improve or disfigure, I know not: if it had been in Tierra Caliénte, I should have thought it

was, perhaps, a cunning "dodge" to keep musquitoes away.

Imagine their horrible god of war, Megitli, being born with a shield in one hand, an arrow in the other, a great plume of pea-green feathers on his villanous pate, his visage dyed a sort of true or garter blue, and his left leg adorned with—not the insignia of the Order of the same Garter—but with a luxuriant crop of feathers: the monster's colossal statue thus represents him. It is supposed that somewhere about fifty thousand human victims were sacrificed every year in Mexico alone to their different idol demons! The knowledge of this takes away very much from one's interest in the Aztecs, and even (less justly) one's compassion for poor ill-used Montezuma. Surely they must have been a cruel people originally to have had so cruel a religion, but, of course, individually, may be entirely exonerated from such a charge.

The cathedral covers an immense space of ground, has two lofty white ornamented towers, and its interior is inconceivably rich and splendid. There is a very costly balustrade, that occupies the centre of the church, which is composed of a metal brought from China, through the Philippine Islands. It is called from this circumstance, "Metal de

China:" it is supposed to be a composition of brass and silver, and is very massive. It is said to have cost an immense sum, as it was actually paid for by the weight in hard dollars, and some say it contains so much *gold*, that a rich silversmith in Mexico offered the bishop a new silver rail of exactly equal weight, in exchange for the old metal!

On the hallowed pavement of the cathedral stood or knelt a large number of persons, and we discovered that a funeral service was going on there. Beside the coffin on the bier, which was placed rather near the entrance, were priests chanting dismally and very nasally. A number of lighted candles were disposed round the coffin—holy water was thrown on it, and soon after the corpse was carried out. It appeared to be the funeral of a poor person, as the mourners were miserably attired. Subsequently, and with only a brief interval, another coffin was brought in, and the same ceremony repeated. The nave, with its arch resting on pillars of a partly gothic character, and the high altar at the extremity, with its magnificent pile, resplendent with burnished gold and solid silver, and costly marbles, formed a very imposing spectacle. The many shrines along the side aisles were adorned with dif-

ferent pictures, and on all sides were beheld the glitter of gold and the pomp of almost inexhaustible treasure. Some of the railings and the lamps are said to be of solid silver. There was a long row of female penitents kneeling at the altar, with immense lighted candles in their hands: they turned round and stared our *bonnets* entirely out of countenance, smiling as they did so, and I am afraid nudging one another; we relieved our poor shamefaced bonnets from their embarrassment, by removing them quickly from their gaze.

After quitting the interior of the cathedral we threaded our way among the Señoras and Señoritas, léperos, rancheros, Indians and begging children (who are terrible little torments in Mexico, and pursue you sometimes mounted upon each other's shoulders, like the posturing Arabs), and went to see on the outer wall of the building the famous calendar stone of the Aztecs. It is fastened on the wall, and is a very large circular stone of basaltic porphyry, covered with curious hieroglyphical figures, by which the Aztecs used to designate the different months of the year, and which it is thought formed a perpetual calendar. This immense sculptured stone, with its astronomical signs, gives one a more favourable idea of the people

than the horrible idolatries I have spoken of before.

We have lately been to see the National Museum, which is extremely interesting. Mr. D—— was good enough to be our cicerone.

Let me give the reader a slight idea of the dreadful Stone of Sacrifices, which, however, at once puts to flight all the better opinions that the great calendar might have induced one to form of the ancient lords of the land. It was upon this that their hideous human sacrifices were performed, those with which the great Temple of ancient Tenochtitlan was so fearfully disgraced and defiled. This stone is in excellent preservation, and bears its silent but eloquent and terrible testimony to the horrors and barbarities of their so called religious rites and ceremonies. It has a hollow in the centre, into which was inserted a piece of jasper, and upon this were stretched the miserable victims, while their hearts were deliberately cut out by the pitiless priests. There are little canals or grooves which slant towards the edge, for carrying off the blood of the unhappy sufferer. Hard by is the hideous idol's shrine, in whose honour these detestable sacrifices were performed. The extracted palpitating heart was laid at the grotesque monster's feet, after being

inspected by the high priest, and subsequently introduced into his open mouth. The tongue projected; and in the hollow thus made, the revolting offering was thrust, being pushed in with a spoon of gold by the chief priest.

We are told that the unfortunate wretches were held down by six priests, while the appalling operation was performed. The collars have been preserved (and were shown to us) which they put on the necks of the helpless victims to keep them quiet, while the abominable murderers "stole their hearts away," in this most atrocious fashion. Alas! to think there was no ether and no chloroform in those days—not that those merciless demons would have used it, though.

During the ghastly tragedies above mentioned, those half dozen assistant executioners, it appears, were wont to be clad in red garments, with waving crests of green feathers on their heads: in their ears were hung rings of green and gold, and blue stones were cunningly fastened in their upper-lips. What beauties must they have looked! They had actually devised a costume more outrageously ugly than that of our parish beadles, or even than the old Windsor uniform.

After the devoted hearts had been extracted (the poor victims would have found it very

difficult to retaliate on their tormentors—the heartless barbarians!) they cut off the heads of the unfortunates, and used them in adding to the Tower of Skulls; then they devoured some portions of the bodies, and consumed the remainder, or flung it to some of the wild animals that were confined and kept in the palace precincts. Some speak of that foul idol as a goddess; — what a vile representative of a Queen of Hearts!

After that sight I shall not scowl again at a New York omnibus, or any other evidence of human progress and civilization. I should not feel shocked—not much—if I saw that horrible old gaping idol thrust into a modern deal packing-case (supposing it were less huge), and addressed,

"To —— MONTEZUMA & GUATAMOZIN, Esqs.,
In the SHADES (of the Cypresses),
Chapultepec Gardens.
Per omnibus,
To be left till called for.

If the case were directed to those sanguinary priests, it would be asking the omnibus to go a little *too much out of its way* to leave it for them.

The idol in question is the hugest and most hideous of all the abominable objects scattered round the great sacrificial stone, heterogeneous

combinations of human figures, with those of animals and reptiles. The presiding genius of the place—this horror of horrors—the Aztec god of war—rejoices in the euphonious name of Queatzalcoatl, which sounds somewhat like the quacking of a duck, and sometimes like quizzical, is about fourteen feet high, with four faces, and pairs of arms and legs in proportion. (I hope I have not confounded this with the other respected gentleman, Megitli, and that in reality this old "quizzical" is the god of the air.) His chasmy mouth seems angrily yawning for its awful accustomed banquet. One almost felt inclined to pin a paper, in mockery and revenge, deaf-and-dumb beggar fashion, to its breast, with "starving" written thereon.

The remainder of the abominations scattered on the pavement around, were, some of them like Chinese inventions of deformity, and others peculiar, I think, to Aztec conceptions; such as serpents in a full dress of feathers, and other incongruities. Queatzalcoatl might be presented to the Peace Congress, methinks, as a very fair representation and embodiment of the terrible genius of war.

These hateful and yet painfully interesting relics of antiquity, are collected in the court-

yard of the Museum, and railed round. We were admitted, however, inside the fence, and so had an excellent view of them. In the centre of this courtyard stands the famous colossal equestrian statue of Charles IV., executed by the Mexican sculptor, Tolsa. It is very highly praised by Humboldt, and in general is said to be the finest work of the kind in the New World. It is of bronze. The horse (modelled from an Andalusian charger, I believe) I could not admire; it looked clumsy, I thought, and without any symmetry. It has spirit, however, and its royal rider looks animated and life-like. The attitude is fine and striking, and altogether it is a very noble work. Lord M. Kerr took a capital sketch of it.

In the interior of the Museum we saw many interesting remains of the ancient Indian possessors of the country, and also mementos of the earlier Spanish race. Here are preserved the coats of mail of the great Cortez and of Alvarado. Cortez, judging from his armour—helmet, cuishes, and breastplate—must have been a man of about the height of the Duke of Wellington (a height much in fashion for heroes in all ages), and of a powerful frame. Pedro de Alvarado, who performed the cele-

brated leap, on the far-famed night which obtained the melancholy name of the *Noche Triste*, apparently was slighter and rather taller than his great chief. The measure of this wonderful leap is still shown on a walk near the spot, while the fosse, crossed by a little bridge (it is, however, I believe, filled up now), retains the denomination of "El Salto de Alvarado."

This *Salto* took place on the 1st of July, 1520, when the Spanish invaders were compelled to retreat from Mexico to the heights of Tepeyayac. On this mournful and memorable occasion Cortez commanded the troops to march in silence. The vanguard was led by the intrepid and invincible Sandoval: the valiant Pedro de Alvarado brought up the rear. It was indeed a melancholy night—a *noche triste* in every sense. The rain poured down in almost sheets of water; the heavens were obscured by black clouds; the splendid moon and stars of Mexico were invisible,—all was quiet,—the dreary echoes of the splashing rain alone drowned the measured steps of the retreating Spaniards. A wooden bridge, to enable them to traverse the moats or canals, was borne along by a number of the soldiers, and on they went, full of determination and

energy, under their renowned leaders. The first canal was passed in safety—the hostile sentinels, who guarded it, were overpowered; but the sound of the almost momentary struggle had aroused one or more of the watchful priests. The consecrated trumpets were loudly blown—"to arms!" was the cry; and the suddenly awakened city sprang from its peaceful slumber. The retreating forces of Cortez were rapidly hemmed in, and surrounded, by water and land. They had just reached the second canal, and there the hideous conflict raged fearfully: the canal was literally bridged over with dead bodies, and along them the rear guard passed. Cortez performed prodigies of valour, and poor Alvarado of jumping; yet not against him be this recorded. Alone by chance on the border of the third canal to which he had fought his way, with intrepid courage, his horse being killed, and himself encircled by merciless enemies (perhaps with the pleasing idea of Queatzalcoatl before him) against whom it was hopeless for him to contend single-handed, he, with prompt decision, planted his lance firmly in the bottom of the canal, and lightly leaning his weight against it, sprang into the air, and vaulted over with an agile bound safely to the opposite shore, leaving the

Indians gaping and gazing with uncontrollable admiration and wonder at the tremendous feat. A contemporary author says, when they beheld this surprising leap they ate earth by handfuls. To bite the dust, it appears, was to express approbation in those days — a disagreeable mode, we should think, of elaborating a bravo. How expensive a way it would be in California! (Had they had Jenny Lind in those days, small landed proprietors would have eaten their whole estates bodily.) But the reader will be tired of "Alvarado of the Leap," whose leap I have certainly not skipped over.

Mr. D—— pointed out to us, among other things, the fine map of Ancient Mexico, which was actually given by Montezuma to Cortez. There was a vast assemblage of antiques on every side—Indian idols, amulets, and ornaments (mostly cut in obsidian, I believe). Many of the idols and figures bear a striking resemblance to Egyptian images.

Amongst ancient curiosities were some modern ones—eastern mirrors and Chinese nondescripts, and some marvellously well-executed figures, made of rags by the modern Mexicans. An old woman, who is dying they say, is the only person (except a daughter of hers, whom she has taught,) who knows how to make

them now. There are wax ones that are also clever, but they are very common, and not to be compared to those of this "Ragged School" of Art.

At one end of the room there was a little plant of the manita flower; there are but three trees of the Arbol de las Manitos (*Cheirostemon platanifolium*), I am informed, in Mexico: it grows to a considerable size. Two are to be found in the Botanical Gardens, and one is in the Toluca Mountains.

I was introduced in the Museum to an English gentleman, who has lately arrived here from a sojourn of two years in Siberia,—a voluntary exile. He then left Kamtskatka in a Russian merchant vessel, visited Polynesia, and subsequently the interior of South America. He had just come from the western coast of Mexico, and intends going from Vera Cruz by the next packet, on his way home. What an extensive and interesting tour!

After the stillness and seclusion of the Museum and the grim company of so many grinning idols and dusty relics of the past, the gay streets overflowing as usual with pedestrians, horsemen, and carriages, seemed doubly exhilarating and amusing; not that I did not appreciate those memorials of the olden time,

and wish there were many more of them, unspoiled and unshattered; for well says the old Mexican, Ant. de Gama, "Quantos preciosos monumentos de la antiquedad por falta de intelligenza, habran perecido en esta mañera."

I wish I could give any adequate idea of the beauty of Mexico, it is so unlike any other place in the world. Humboldt says, setting aside its very peculiar situation, that it is one of the very finest cities ever built by Europeans in either hemisphere, being only inferior to St. Petersburgh, London, Berlin, or Philadelphia, as respects the regularity and length of its streets, as well as the extent of its public places. But then to make these compare with charming Mexico, you must widen and adorn those streets with those gay covered colonnades, the *portales* (the despicable and discarded Regent Street covered way gave not the slightest idea of them), pour into them the picturesque and streaming population of a Neapolitan holiday, give them a sky overhead yet clearer and more exquisitely beautiful than that of fair Parthenope herself, enthrone everlasting spring upon their terraces and gardens, and then place the whole in such a paradisiacal valley as this, with its giant wall around it, of the snow-crowned Cordillera.

Fancy coming at the end of Bond Street or Park Lane, to a view of sublimer Alps, and more colossal Pyrenees. On looking down any of the principal thoroughfares and streets of this capital, you behold these grand mountain forms towering into the sky, clearly defined against the lucid lustrous cerulean of the heavenly arch, and sometimes almost as if they were within a stone's throw, so marvellously pure is this atmosphere.

I wonder if the shops and stalls are always so abundantly provided as they seem to be now : perhaps they are particularly full, as it is so near the Carnival. In many of the shops are the most beautiful materials for ladies' dresses, shawls of all the colours of the prism, scarfs of all the shapes and patterns which Proteus, or Mrs. and the Miss Proteuses could have by possibility desired. You might ransack your imagination in vain for a quarter of the multiplicity of articles which greet the eyes at every turn.

What is there not to be found here? Look round; here are sombreros, mantillas, rebosos, satins, silks, silver, gold, china, pictures, mats, and twenty thousand things besides, all close at hand; and just look at those splendidly embroidered cloth-mangos for gentlemen, with a

circular piece of coloured velvet in the middle to act as a sort of masculine necklace. Here are wax figures, most elaborately and exquisitely finished, faithful representations of every class in Mexico, a perfect population in themselves, and, it is asserted, not given to the melting mood, which you would have suspected. Here are spurs, like merely moderately-sized windmills! that weigh, some of them, a pound and a half, and the rowels of which clatter along the pavements when the wearer happens to walk, like a travelling tinker's store on an uproarious and kicking donkey. And here are gold and silver ornaments in lace, and aerial flounces and furbelows, and artificial flowers, which it is said —but I cannot corroborate the assertion by having witnessed anything of the sort — are made by men; and that you may there see a whole regiment of stout, active Mexicans, who ought to be quarrying stone, or working in the mines, or mending their abominable roads (which must destroy a large proportion of ill-starred travellers annually, we should think), with enormous mustachios, and desperate looking *cuchillos* at hand, actually employed in mincingly manipulating delicate decorations for ladies' dresses, trimming fairy caps, and artistically twisting and pinning bows of ribbon.

Would the reader like to give two hundred dollars for a cheap pair of Guadalaxara stamped leathern boots, wrought all over with silver? and a saddle for about double that trifling sum? Would he admire more those *lassos* or *sarapes*, or beautiful Mexican hats with their tassels and broad rolls of shining silver, fastened with little lions, serpents, and other devices? Or has he any fancy to pay away a small fortune for a complete set of horse furniture, and a full riding dress of the country to match? It is a most beautiful costume altogether; and one cannot help hoping the Mexican *caballeros* will not give up their magnificent and appropriate costume and splendid horse equipments, to adopt the ugly fashions of Europe.

I heard English saddles were becoming very common here, but I am unpatriotically happy to say I have seen but few of them. But let us go back to the shops. There are the costly *anqueras*, stamped and gilt, or otherwise curiously and ingeniously wrought, and terminating in a fringe of multitudinous little bells or tags, of silver generally, but sometimes of brass or iron, which jingle merrily as the sledge bells of Russia or Canada. These *anqueras* are sometimes of fur, embroidered

richly with gold and silver in large stripes. And, close by, are the gold-embossed jackets; then there are piles of large silver buttons, which are necessary for the adornment of different portions of the dress; there are trinkets, slippers, wares of all sorts, little images, all kinds of cotton and woollen cloth; in fact, everything, and all things, and a great deal besides!

All the houses here are of stone. In the most distinguished portions of the city, I believe two sorts of hewn stone are used, porous amygdaloid and porphyry. The gates and balustrades are generally of iron and bronze. The houses have flat terraced roofs and large courtyards (*patios*) with colonnades running round them, and are often profusely adorned with plants. We are told the interior is often decorated with beautiful mosaic and arabesque. Few windows, in general, look out upon the streets.

Some of the fronts are enriched with glazed porcelain or beautifully carved and ornamented, and there is usually an imposing-looking arched gateway, in the centre, leading to the colonnaded *patio*; and through them you may occasionally catch delightful Arabian-night-like views of the splendid interiors. They often reminded me of the

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princely palaces of Genoa the Superb, of whose enchanted courts you may frequently catch similar peeps in driving along the streets, and which, seen in this rapid and partial manner, seemed like the aërial visions of a gorgeous dream.

Through the Mexican gateways you see sometimes a beautiful fountain, sparkling against the sun, beds of flowers, or bowers of orange-trees, and the corridor's light and sculptured arches. Some of the buildings are tinted with rich and delicate rosy hues, like the soft reflection of the rising or setting sun, and some have the faintest *soupçon* of a tinge imaginable, like a fairy's blush (if Queen Titania and her handmaidens ever do blush), and some are completely covered with frescoed arabesque designs.

Mr. D—— has taken us to see the Plaza del Toros, the amphitheatre for bull-fights. It is an enormous circular enclosure, in a very dilapidated condition, in consequence of which such exhibitions are at a stand-still here, for it is supposed not to be safe—so the poor bulls *are*. There is an immensely great national manufactory of tobacco in the south-west part of the city, which is said to supply the entire legitimate demands for *cigarros* in the Confederation.

## CHAPTER V.

MEXICO. — THE VIGA. — THE CHINAMPAS. — FLOATING GARDENS, FIELDS AND ORCHARDS OF THE AZTECS. — ABUNDANCE OF FLOWERS IN MEXICO. — AND OF FRUITS. — THE FRUIT STALLS. — THE MEAT AND POULTRY. — TORTOISES, SALAMANDERS AND FROGS. — THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF MEXICO. — ITS NUMBERLESS VEHICLES. — ITS ENVIRONS ON FÊTE DAYS. — DEFECTIVE POLICE ARRANGEMENTS. — FREQUENT ROBBERIES IN CONSEQUENCE. — MEXICAN CHOCOLATE. — VICTORIANA, THE WAITING-MAID.

We are more and more enthusiastically charmed with this peerless Mexico. What a climate—what scenery! What a brilliant and busy city — what beauties and wonders on all sides!

The Viga I am quite delighted with. It is an enchanting promenade, with a canal running on the side of it, half-overshadowed by lovely trees. The Arbol de Peru (Peruvian pepper-tree) was conspicuously graceful and striking among them. There were crowds of Indians in their flat canoes, almost lost among heaps of flowers, and fruits, and vegetables.

We visited the celebrated Chinampas,

formerly the floating garden of the Aztecs, now stationary. They have taken up their permanent abode at a little distance from the canal of Chalco. The metropolis is principally supplied with vegetables from them still. There are flowers sprinkled here and there. The old chroniclers tell us that in 1245, after many persecutions, the Aztecs, wandering from place to place, left Chapultepec to establish themselves in an island group to the south of Tezcuco Lake. Oppressed by Tezcucan chieftains, they sought refuge in Tezapan, where, having assisted the princes of that land in some insignificant wars, they were allowed to establish themselves, in freedom, in a city, which they named Mexicalsingo. But they were commanded by some oracle to transport themselves and their families from thence, to some islands to the eastward of Chapultepec, and to the western side of the Tezcuco Lake.

Long before this, an old tradition was popular amongst them, to the effect—that in whatever place they should see an eagle seated on a nopal, with its roots fixed in a rock, on that spot they should hasten to found a city. They first hailed this sign in 1325, and there (in one of the islands in the lake) they founded the first house of their gods—the great Mexican

temple, called, in their tongue, Teocalli. This history seems to me to bear a faint and perhaps merely fanciful resemblance to that of the modern Mormons, now settled in their flourishing city of the great Salt Lake.

Through all their Arab-like wanderings, wherever they stopped, those Aztecs were wont to cultivate the earth, and where they were then settled, frequently encircled by barbarous enemies, as they were, and in the midst of a great lake where fish were remarkably scarce, they devised the ingenious expedient of forming floating gardens, and fields, and orchards, on the surface of the tranquil waters. These they framed skilfully of the woven-together roots of aquatic plants, wreathed and intermingled with various boughs and branches, and twigs, till they had secured a foundation strong enough to uphold a soil formed of earth drawn from the bottom of the lake. Their corn and chili, and different plants required for their sustenance, were sown on this.

It appears that these gliding gardens were ordinarily elevated about a foot above the surface of the water, and were of an oblong shape. Soon afterwards, these insulated and raft-like fields were adorned with lovely beds of countless flowers, which were not alone

cherished by the people (who were great lovers of these luxuries of nature), but were employed in the worship of their idols, and were a favourite ornament of the palace of their new emperors. These famed Chinampas, along the Viga canal, are now attached to the mainlands, on the grounds that lie between the two great lakes of Chalco and Tezcuco. Little trenches, filled with water, appear to divide the gardens. There are small bridges, thrown across the water, to keep up the communication with the mainland. The Indian proprietor has generally his humble hut in the garden, but no longer can he (if desirous of removing, for a space, his "location"), seated in his canoe, tow along his fairy and flowering island to another part of that fresh, silvery, glistening sea.

Whether in gardens floating or fixed, flowers never fail them in their bewitching climate. Their roses are all *roses des quatre saisons* (so well rendered by Lord ——'s gardener "quarter-sessions roses")! From March to June the flowery sea almost overflows, and its many-coloured waves and sunny tides bury all in their beauty. We are told that, on the *dias di fiesta*, even the very humblest classes are nearly smothered in roses, and

crowned with variegated garlands of carnations, poppies, sweet-peas, jessamine and other gifts of the munificent Flora of Mexico.

If the inhabitants of this favoured land rejoice in myriads of flowers, they have an equal good fortune with respect to fruit. All climates and seasons contend in Mexico to please the natural or acquired tastes of the epicures of the land. The name of their fruit is Legion. Within a very few leagues you may have in Mexico the greatest imaginable variety of climates; in short, from the united influence of its peculiar geological structure, and the way in which heat is qualified by the differences of elevation in every portion of its extensive territory, it combines every conceivable production, and is unparalleled in these particulars on the face of the earth.

The fruit-stalls are veritable natural curiosity shops; the treasures of Pomona seem indeed here innumerable; from the north, the south, the east, the west, they appear to be gathered together in inexhaustible profusion; chirimoyas, bananas, chicozapotes, pine-apples, pears, oranges, apples, grenaditas de China, melons, cocoa-nuts, black and white zapotes, capulin (the Mexican cherry), dates, mameys, mulberries, plums, shaddocks, pomegranates, mangoes, citrons, walnuts, straw-

berries, and thousands of others. The consumption of these, and of vegetables, such as tomatoes, potatoes, plantains, cauliflowers, garbanzos (a small bean, much in favour), gourds, cabbages, &c., is stated to be quite enormous in proportion to the population. I should think such articles of food were much wholesomer in this climate than meat; but I believe the city markets are also well supplied with the latter. Turkeys, and poultry in general, and a very great variety of wild water-fowl are abundant, and at very reasonable prices; and also rabbits, hares, pigeons, &c. They have besides, a choice selection of rather singular articles of diet, which the lower classes are said to patronize extensively: tortoises, creatures they call salamanders, and frogs. I have sometimes eaten the latter at Naples, and found them excellent when fried; very like a delicate little spring chicken; but here I have never seen them brought to table.

There is also a plentiful supply of good mutton, beef and pork, but veal is said to be prohibited. The necessaries of existence ought to be cheap enough here, one should think, but in other things Mexico is reckoned a very expensive place to live in.

The population here in general is of a mixed character, perhaps one half being Creoles (or

descendants of the Spaniards), one fourth Mestizoes, half castes between Europeans and Indians, and nearly another fourth copper-coloured Indians; with some Blacks and Mulattoes, and from six to seven thousand Europeans.

Many of the grandees and magnates here (frequently successful speculators) are possessed of enormous wealth, but the masses are commonly lazy and indigent. Great numbers pass their time in lounging about the streets, portales, markets, church porches, and various public buildings, asking charity of the passers by, and appealing usually to what they imagine to be the most lively feelings of the persons they address. "Señor, by the love of the most blessed Madonna!" and, "Madrecita, by the life of the little one!" and so forth. They seem a happy set of people, enjoying their *far niente*. My *châtelaine* always drew their most attentive regards, and I was almost afraid one day it would suddenly be snatched away from its ordinary sphere of being; but they contented themselves, like good children, with looking and not touching.

The white Creoles are said to be distinguished for courtesy, gentleness of manners, kindness and hospitality; and, from the very

little I have seen of them I can readily believe it.

Carriages seem literally to swarm in Mexico; everybody appears to possess one, or more. I believe the señoras here consider it the most indispensable of all necessaries. There are *carratelas*, and French open carriages, and English closed ones, and *volantes*, and I know not how many more species; but they are multiform and multinominal, and multitudinous; and in the evening they appear in shoals, filled with beautiful señoras and señoritas, their large black eyes flashing out like lamps designed to dispel the gathering dusk.

The environs of the city, too, are said to be generally gay and crowded in the evening, especially on *fête* days, and to present a joyous scene of bustle and animation. Hundreds of light canoes, of different sizes, mostly with awnings, and crowded with Mestizoes and native Indians, are to be seen gliding along in all directions on the shining canals, generally with an indefatigable guitar-player among the company, and some of the festive party singing, or perhaps dancing.

Mr. D—— says, however, from defective police arrangements, or other causes, it is dangerous to go out of the city after dusk without

arms. Some persons incautiously doing so, have been lassoed and plundered, and everybody who is compelled to go should go well armed—more penalties for living in such a paradise! They say these gentry who are so free with their lassos are mostly of the mongrel sort, part native (Indian), part Spanish, and part Negro; and that the gangs of guerillas and robbers, which annoyed the American armies during the war, were chiefly formed of such tricolor individuals.

Last night we found it a little too cool in our skylighted windowless apartment, and I asked for a *brasero*, or *braserico* (a kind of chafing-dish). After a little delay, one was brought, but the warmth it afforded was barely sufficient to warm the tips of our fingers—however, fortunately, but little more is needed. I find the air here very delightful, and none of us have experienced, during our very short *séjour* here, the remotest inconvenience from the rarification of the atmosphere in this elevated region; but Lord Mark told us, the other day, he found occasionally an unaccustomed oppression and shortness of breathing on running up stairs, or ascending a hill, since his arrival in Mexico.

I wish the reader could have a glimpse of the damsel who especially waits on us. She

is named Victoriana. Her long jet-black hair flows and "wanders at its own sweet will," sometimes waving over-shadowingly above our chocolate cups in a rather alarming manner; but she usually contrives with a little twist and toss of her head to prevent its sweeping away the deep foam from that richest of beverages.

And here I must quit Victoriana for a while, to rave a little about Mexican chocolate. It is nectar and ambrosia at once, and I think would spoil us for everything everywhere: tea in China with the ethereal flower in it, which will not bear keeping or carriage; coffee at Mocha would surely seem nothing, or positively nauseous, in comparison. I believe the plant from which it is made is the natural growth of Mexico — and Olympus, perhaps. When the jetty-locked Victoriana brings it in the morning for *desayuno*, with a most excellent sweet roll (an improvement on an English bun), if Messrs. Mars, Phœbus and Mercury, and Mesdames Juno and Pallas dropped in unexpectedly through the skylight, we should be able to provide them at once with their usual food, the "best entertainment" for gods and goddesses.

Victoriana has one of the merriest of countenances, and appears clad at all times in the simplest of dresses, the throat, shoulders, and

arms bare, and the drapery altogether very cool and airy, the damsel's own abundant hair playing a large part in it. She is a great chatterbox, and talks rare gibberish and *patois*. She has found out that we are exceedingly fond of milk, and good-naturedly exerts herself to bring us a large supply of it—sometimes, I think, leaving the good people at the *table d'hôte* with a considerably diminished quantity. This milk is delicious; it is brought in a kind of huge cauldron, holding about a couple of pails, or thereabouts.

In my own mind I am perfectly convinced that Victoriana is Indian—(she is of a tolerably near approach to black: it may be an invisible green, which sombre colouring is lit up by blazing bright dark eyes and white teeth)—but she will not hear of such a thing for a moment. No; oh no! "Soy Mexicana!" Yes, that of course;—but of the Indian race partly? Oh, quite out of the question.—"Vaya una idea!"

V—— did a little portrait of her, which she seemed to admire prodigiously, and called one of the *galopinas* in to look at it. They both praised the performance highly, and at last Victoriana suddenly snatched up the drawing and ran off with it. We ran after her, begging her to restore it (as we wanted to keep

it); but she concealed it somewhere, and then returned, looking very demure, as if nothing had happened. "Como dice Vm.? Me habla Vm.? No entiendo bien lo que Vm. dice!" (which was just possible!) "Vaya vaya el retrato, el dibujo?" "Si, el retrato, es muy bonito." After ineffectual attempts to make her refund it, another was done, which she served in exactly the same way. Off she scampered with it, like a mouse carrying off a morsel of cheese to its hole to devour it at leisure. It was useless to draw her any more, as it was evident if one hundred and fifty were sketched they would all be carried off and hidden in a similar manner.

If other travellers should take the fancy to sketch her too, what a gallery of portraits she will have, and all of herself! She looked so enchanted, however, with her own *beaux yeux* on paper, that I think she intends distributing these little representations of herself among her relations and friends, to show them how handsome she is, of which fact she might think they were not sufficiently aware, and, therefore, designs impressing it on their minds duly.

There is a very splendid bedstead here, most beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl: the workmanship is exquisite.

## CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL HERRERA, THE PRESIDENT OF MEXICO, AND THE AMERICAN MINISTER.—CHAPULTEPEC ASSAULTED AND TAKEN BY GENERAL SCOTT. — ENORMOUS CYPRESSES IN THE GARDEN OF MONTEZUMA. — DONA MARIANA THE AZTEC WIFE OF CORTEZ. —VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF CHAPALTUPEC CASTLE. — IMPRESSIONS CAUSED BY IT. — THE MOUNTAINS TACUBAYA AND TOLUCA. — TANKS AND BATHS OF MONTEZUMA. — THE OPERA HOUSE AT MEXICO. — THE FAT COMIC ACTRESS AND THE BRILLIANTLY DRESSED ONE. — BEAUTY OF MEXICAN LADIES. — MADAME BISHOP. — PAYMENTS IN KIND FOR HER SINGING. — BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCE OF THE STARS IN MEXICO.—VIEW OF DUSTY VICTIMS ALIGHTING FROM THE DILIGENCE.—THE BROTHER OF M. ARAGO THE ASTRONOMER. — THE VOLCANOES, PAPOCATEPETL AND IZTACCHIHUATL. — PATIO OF M. ARAGO.

This morning we had a visit from our excellent friend Mr. L——, who was presented to the President in due form yesterday, and delivered his address extremely well.

He told us he had never been accustomed, in his own country, to so much form, and pomp, and state, and ceremony, as is observed by the Mexican President, and that—owing to this circumstance—and being rather taken

by surprise in these particulars, he felt a little nervousness and trepidation which, however, soon passed over. By the account he gave us of it, the President of Mexico must assume much of monarchical state. Mr. —— said General Herrera was seated on a sort of throne raised on a platform at one end of the hall, under a splendid canopy, with many ministers and officers around him, the latter dressed in very costly and magnificent uniforms. "Such splendid and bedizened-out uniforms, to be sure; and," he added, laughingly, "I thought it must all look just like Solomon on his throne, with his great courtiers round him." Mr. —— had been offered the choice of coming to this country, or going to St. Petersburg. I think the grandeur and splendour of the Czar's court would have struck him a little more than General Herrera's republican royalty.

He seemed much pleased with the President and his reception, and appears altogether to like Mexico, which, charming as it is, is a compliment to it, for I believe he had never left home before: under these circumstances it is very common, as well as natural, to feel a little of the *mal du pays*. He is looking for a house, as he expects Mrs. —— will join him in May.

We have had a delightful visit to Chapultepec: this fortified castle was taken by the American forces in the late war, under General Scott. It is the most haunted by old Aztec memories of all the traditionary and interesting localities which Mexico can claim. We had a charming drive.

Chapultepec is an isolated volcanic hill, rising in the centre of the great plain, about three-quarters of a league from the capital. The Indian name for it may be interpreted, I believe, the "Hill of Grasshoppers." Its position is singular and remarkable: it shoots up boldly in the heart of the valley, precipitously steep on all sides; the zigzagging road has still the *adobe* embankments (*adobes* are sun-dried bricks), and the little corner batteries which the Mexicans threw up in anticipation of the American attack, and there are almost innumerable traces of General Scott's cannon balls, from Tacubaya, and from the elevated ground to the rear of Molino del Rey; these are to be seen in all directions. The poor Mexicans had a too plentiful peppering for their *frijoles* on that occasion.

But before I say more of the fortress of Chapultepec let me do homage to the great cypresses in what is still called the Garden of Montezuma. We drew up to within a

short distance of them in the carriage, and Mr. D—— then proposed that we should alight and walk towards them, which we did through a tangled wilderness of yellow flowers. They are the most glorious trees I ever beheld. The largest of them all was said, by Humboldt, to be forty-one feet in circumference; but I am told it is actually forty-five feet. It certainly looks yet more than this. The vast trunk seemed to me like a noble tower shooting towards the sky, and lost in its own far-spreading and mighty cloud of deep green foliage, where half an army might have hid —*à la* "King Charles in his oak." Soft streamers of thick grey moss depend from every bough, which gives these trees a doubly venerable and patriarchal appearance.

The cypress which is second in size to the huge one I have mentioned, is little inferior in any respect; and indeed by some it is thought more beautiful and graceful. There are several others of dimensions almost similar. Would not Michael Angelo, that poet-sculptor, have thundered at them, as he did at his own Moses, though with a different feeling, "speak!" Think what they could tell, had they tongues (and brains and memories into the bargain, by the way). Venerable were they

when Montezuma was a puling infant, and a mischievous hobble-de-hoy! and they looked on in unaltered unshaken majesty, while the gallant Scott thundered, with his conquering artillery, against the strongholds of the descendants of Montezuma's Spanish conquerors; while the echoes of the world-overspreading Anglo-Saxon tongue thrilled through the branches of those thousand year-old monarchs of the forest, and may have rejoiced the shades of the avenged Aztecs.

The opening onset of the gallant and ever-victorious Americans, when they stormed Chapultepec, was made under cover of these mammoth trees. Perchance these stately survivors of empires, creeds, triumphs, wars, and a hundred changes, may still stand in their solemn pride and lordly majesty, when a hundred other changes may have transformed all around but themselves and their mighty comrades, the mountains.

It is whispered by the voice of superstition, that these scenes are haunted by Malinche—not the mountain but the maiden, though a walking mountain might stalk under those trees—in short, by the spectre of the celebrated Doña Mariana, the beauteous Aztec love of the great Cortez. If such be the case, she is a

ghost of taste, it must be owned; and one cannot wonder she snatched away the heart of the gallant Cortez—not in the way her countrymen, the red-jacketed cannibal priests were wont to accomplish such operations. She became, as it were, a sort of counter-conqueror, and ruled rather despotically over the great captain of the age.

The true name of these cypresses is Ahuahuete (*Sabino ahuahuete*, or *Cupressus disticha*). The chief of these is called Montezuma's cypress. At the village of Atlixco, there is said to be a cypress (they are not like what we in England call by that name) seventy-six feet in circumference, and which is supposed to be one of the oldest of vegetable monuments on the face of the globe, if not indeed the *most* ancient.

But this is not all. At a village called St. Maria del Tule, ten miles to the east of the capital, there is an immense trunk of the same species of cypress, measuring one hundred and eighteen feet in circumference, though by all account it would appear to be three stems, closely, almost imperceptibly, joined together. It must be like the great "Boabab" of Asia; but the suspicion of this latter one being a treble tree, renders it less interesting. I confess, in one of the mighty

Ahuahetes that I saw, I detected something that looked as if a similar process had taken place. There is certainly a suspicious line along the trunk; but I am assured I am wrong, and by those likely to know better than I do.

After admiring this giant grove for some time, we crept, feeling very microscopical and mite-like, back to the carriage, which had assumed considerably the appearance of a nut-shell drawn by the "industrious fleas," formerly in vogue in London, by comparison with these colossal suzerains of the vegetable world. We intended to drive up the precipitously steep (but zigzagged) ascent on which stands embattled the castle, but the fates willed it otherwise, and we had not gone many yards before the harness broke, and our gallant greys (fine-looking American horses) were relieved from the trouble of dragging us up. The Mexican *cochero* indulged in some vituperations against the American harness; the horses took the whole affair very philosophically; and we, anxious to see the beauteous view which we knew the elevated summit of Chapultepec must present, left Mr. —— to superintend the *criados*, and the reparation of the damage, and climbed up the hill.

It was rather toilsome work, but we felt a

great reward was awaiting us; we pushed on vigorously, and, at length, found ourselves on the height, and on a broad gravelled terrace fronting the entrance. Trumpets were sounding cheerily, but we stayed not to ascertain why or where, intent upon taking, not the castle, but the best possible position for seeing the *hermosa vista.* The commandant—as we afterwards ascertained he was — came forward, and very courteously asked if we would like to see the view from the *azotea* of the castle, and observed we must be much fatigued by climbing the precipitous ascent. I informed him of the accident that had occurred, and that we had come with the *Ministro Ingles,* who was detained at the bottom of the hill by the misfortune aforesaid. He immediately said he knew the *ministro,* and scarcely had he pronounced the words, before Mr. D—— appeared on the esplanade, having scrambled up by a short cut, I believe, and a still more steep and far more rugged path than the one we followed. Indeed, it looked pretty nearly perpendicular. Mutual civilities were exchanged, and we forthwith hurried to the flat roof of the castle.

What a Paradise world we saw! the different and greatly diversified scenes were all mingled

and mixed in beauty without end. How surpassingly grand was the apparently illimitable and gigantically-castellated amphitheatre of heights! The sun shone gloriously, and the stupendous mountains, especially the magnificent Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, seemed joining earth and heaven, yet with their mighty foreheads turning pale at their own audacity, blanched as they are by interfulgent snows.

To particularize the separate glories of this unparalleled panorama to oneself at first seemed impossible; all appeared to be blended together in one magical unity. After long, long gazing, till that ocean of beauty seemed to spread over the whole mind and spirit, and leave every thought bathed and streaming with its splendours, one began to know that this vision of magnificence was composed of various parts—some earthly and material parts too; but still it was—oh, how glorious! and from that height all below was so still, so calm; shining, too, in such a blaze of dazzling light, that the earth around you seemed no more the common earth.

Some mighty change seemed to have taken place—you gazed on dreamily, and the scene seemed to grow more and more awful in its beauty — Nature's apotheosis, as it were; a

world divided from the sinning struggling world without. The grand mountains seemed not so much like vast masses of earth towering up and heaving their giant forms towards the cerulean firmament, as stooping, downward-leaning heavens themselves—immeasurably vast stupendous stalactites, depending grandly from the unimaginable heights of an overarching Celestial Universe above; in short, all kinds of wild fancies entered one's mind—for really it was as if the loveliness and majesty of a thousand worlds were concentrated here.

But it is not, after all, so much the scene itself, as the great and boundless glory the imagination ever lends it; for the soul once awakened, and stirred and thrilled by the sight of that magnificent scenery, makes it ten thousand fold more glorious. She heaps far other mountains of more transcending height upon those visible ones; and it is she who clothes them with a heavenly awfulness, and it is she who kindles the firmament into most unutterable splendour above, as if it were all made of the moving brightness of angels' blazing passing shadows, and it is she who brings the stars in their mid-majesty as suns, as worlds gorgeously shimmering down upon that paradisiacal prospect; for she unites it with all that the im-

mense and glorious universe, without a shadow of a limit, hath of the majestic, and of the lovely, and of the terrible.

Perhaps it might be thought that the view of the city of Mexico would detract a little from the visionary appearance of this world-wide prospect; but, indeed, it does not. Its glittering towers, its many churches and convents and domes, looked almost spiritually beautiful at that distance, with that exquisite sunlight beaming upon them, and making them sparkle like silver and crystal, as beautiful as if they all (like what is reported of Puebla's cathedral) were built by Angelical architects, and of supernatural materials.

The valley itself looks matchlessly lovely from Chapultepec; and if there are some symptoms here and there of a lack of care and cultivation, the few uninhabited *haciendas*, partly dilapidated, with patches of earth around them, left to the wildness of Nature, were the more picturesque, and lent more variety to the scene. There were vast tracts covered by the silvery-gleaming plantations of *magueys* to be seen, great fields where herds of cattle were pasturing; exquisite gardens, rainbows of the earth, shadowing *paséos* near the city, and groves of many-foliaged trees.

Then how endless appeared all the beauteous shapes of the nearer rocks and hills; and how the fertile variegated valley of enchantment flows far in among the mighty mountains in some parts, which seem to fall back before it, and so the ever-waving lines are beyond imagination varied and lovely.

In one part the rocks and heights are far off in the horizon, and in another they are almost running into the valley, like rugged promontories and capes frowning and peering down on its tranquil scenes.

But the sparkling canals must not be forgotten; nor the stately aqueducts, with their open tops and noble lines of a thousand arches; nor the sapphire-tinted lakes; nor the romantic villages, with their clustering masses of trees; nor the lordly avenues of bright-leaved poplars and shady elms leading to the city; nor the wonderful skies above, that looked clear, brilliant, fervid, and glowing, as if they were all of blue flame, burning more and more brightly every moment. Only fifteen miles beyond Tacubaya tower the mountains of Toluca, and Guadaloupe's apparently insulated hills are not much farther on the opposite side; but, in the other directions, the valley spreads its sea-like surface between fifty and sixty miles

before it reaches the everlastingly-planted feet of the mountains.

Tacubaya lies near Chapultepec, with her gardens of flowers, and her pomp of sumptuous palaces. The shrine of "Our Lady of Guadaloupe" stands on the brink of a mountain promontory, which sallies out towards the lovely Lake of Tezcuco. To the north is Tacuba. The tops, I might well say the great *domes* of foliage of the gigantic cypresses were at our feet to the left. Amongst the hamlets, scattered about to the southward, are those of San Augustin, San Angel, and various others.

We then went and looked down the steep rocks over which it is said the unfortunate Mexicans, after having given up all further thoughts of defence, flung themselves in despair, and fell crushed and mangled at the base. While we were there, a little *commandantino* ran out of the castle, in the shape of the Colonel's pretty boy, a charming little fellow, with a sword by his side, the most soldier-like strut, and the blackest and merriest of eyes.

After thanking the obliging commandant for his civility, we descended, and went to see the tanks and baths of Montezuma. One could not but look back, again and again, on the colossal

Ahuahuetes, that had overshadowed, perhaps, in the olden time the imperial ruler of the Mexicans—and what a presence chamber would that glorious grove have been—what a hall of audience! If powerful kings had come to visit the Aztec monarch, could he have received them in a nobler state chamber? What a canopy more than regal over his head, fretted with the diamond and golden dews of evening! Mr. L—— might have thought of Solomon's glories, indeed, under such circumstances, and still more of those wonders and triumphs of Nature—of her prodigal riches of vegetation, that excel him "in all his glory."

The castle of Chapultepec was built by the viceroy Galvez, the last representative of the Spanish monarchy in this country. The vice-queen was a famed beauty, and was exceedingly popular in Mexico; and he was wealthy and magnificent. It was supposed to have cost the Spanish government three hundred thousand dollars. Chapultepec was said to have occasioned great jealousy and suspicion to the Mexicans. Though thus originally built as a mere summer palace, its commanding and excellent position, fortified and strengthened with walls and parapets towards Mexico, with moats and underground vaults to the north, which

were sufficiently large to contain an immense supply of provisions, rendered such a distrust and suspicion not unnatural. It was something like the deception practised concerning the fortifications of Paris; only it was pretended there, that they were built to guard against the possible attacks of a foreign foe, and here, that there was no fortification contemplated at all, only a summer mansion with a beautiful view for the innocent delights of the *Villegiatura.*

One thousand and fifty bombs fell on this devoted fortress, during the late hostilities, before the assault. The head-quarters of General Scott were in the palace of the Bishop of Tacubaya, which place is clearly visible from Chapultepec, and said to be actually within the reach of its guns. Though Chapultepec was well defended and manned by artillery and infantry, it is not considered that it can use cannon to advantage when the attacking forces have approached the base of the rock.

We paid a visit to the great square tank, from whence, we are told, the grand aqueduct is supplied. Its water is of the clearest sparkling crystal, and of the most exquisite transparency. The "Koh-i-noor," the "Mountain of Light" can hardly be brighter. There is a cave too of no great dimensions.

One more look at that glorious grove, at those hoary and wondrous trees, and, above all, at the stupendous giant of them all, standing there in its mighty greatness, so solemn, so placid, so darkly and silently sublime, with its own vast shadow making an Eclipse, and an Evening twilight, and shedding a gathered gloom and a dense duskiness around—in itself a wood—and then back to lovely Mexico.

We rolled through the gates, and went on at a fair pace, till our harness gave way again, and caused a little delay. At last we gained the *paséo* in safety, where our rope-repaired tackle could not have shone very brilliantly; but we little minded that, and rattled steadily on to the Hotel de Diligencias, when, after bidding good even to Mr. ——, we went to dinner, with our thoughts full of giant cypresses, mountains, Montezumas, Malinches, and fortresses.

I must now say a word or two about the Mexican Opera-house which we went to, though the opera company is not here now ; but plays are performed there. It is a very handsome theatre indeed, and the box of the *Ministro Ingles* is capitally situated. We had a Spanish comedy. A señora acted, and very well too, who had formerly, I believe, been a celebrated beauty; but she was too fat to permit the *beaux restes* to vouch much for her previous

perfection. Without being absolutely like the lady whom a friend of mine compared to a "feather bed in spectacles" (that lady wore glasses), she bore a faint resemblance to a very liberally stuffed eider-down quilt. She, however, was full of life and merriment, and the very dimples on her broad elbows seemed to laugh, ha! ha! as she shook with the severe exercise, which the employment of the risible faculties was for her, when occasionally, during some droll passage of the performance, she indulged in it.

Another señora on the stage was very brilliantly dressed, as a Madrileña (a native of Madrid). Whether the costume was correct I cannot say, not having been in that part of Spain. It was one of the costumes, I imagine, of the middle classes. The dress was of white satin, with very bright full scarlet flouncings, and a large black lace mantilla, most gracefully and coquettishly disposed, with a single flower, I think, on one side of the head, fastened on the splendid ebon braids of hair. The wearer of the dress looked extremely pretty in it, and the costume itself had altogether a very pretty and graceful effect, though the description does not sound promising.

My attention being a little taken up by looking at the house, and having the different

occupants of the boxes pointed out to me, I could not very satisfactorily follow the speakers on the stage; but even when I did not perfectly catch the point of the remarks and repartees, those merry dimples aforesaid, on the fat shaking elbows and shoulders—those dimples laughing so heartily (till they, and all that was visible round them, turned to a scarlet, almost as bright as the Madrileña's flounces)—those dimples almost in hysterics, made one laugh just as much as if one had thoroughly understood the joke.

Diamonds were in profusion; some of the ladies were very beautiful, and seemed extremely well dressed; they had the usual dark flashing eyes of Mexico, and the graceful Spanish manner of playing with their fans. I saw no smoking among the ladies—there may have been a little, but I am inclined to think not.

Madame Bishop has lately been singing here, and was exceedingly admired and popular in Mexico. She went into the provinces also, and I hear, at some of the theatres there, her sweet sounds were sometimes paid in fighting-cocks and cigars; to such an extent, indeed, that she was obliged to advertise in the papers that she could receive no more payment in "crowing Chanticleers" or prime "Havannahs," and that none would be taken at the doors.

There was a little *divertissement*, an Andalusian dance, &c. On coming out of the theatre, I was almost rooted to the spot by the marvellous beauty of the stars. I never saw them so glorious before anywhere—so large, so lustrous. The Persian idolator might have found a thousand suns there to worship; they literally gleamed with the different colours of the rainbow. One had a crimson, another an emerald tinge; a third shone on the deep, blue, glorious sky, like cerulean fire on cerulean air. They sparkled, and quivered, and blazed, and *lightened* in their splendour, till the heavens seemed all stirring, and breathing, and living. When we remarked this diversity of colours to Lord Mark afterwards, he laughingly exclaimed, "So even Mexican stars wear the national *sarape*," which idea amazingly amused V——.

We have a broad balcony running all round the interior of this hotel, on the floor on which we are. On the lower story are *almacens* (warehouses). The dining saloon on this floor runs out far across the court-yard like a glass promontory, for it is more like a conservatory than a *comedor* (dining-room), and seems to try and make up by its vast profusion of windows for the deficiencies of these agreeable additions to a house, elsewhere in the

hotel. When we were, by chance, occasionally a little tired of the sky prospect afforded by our *claraboya* (skylight) in this cloudless climate, one sheet of blue, with hardly the least little vagrant cloud to diversify the view, we wandered forth on to the balcony (sooth to say, perpetual sight-seeing has left us but little time in which to grow tired of our sky-peep), as this balcony commanded a splendid view of dusty diligences, and various vehicles of that kind. We were often amused at the comical sights presented when the door was opened, and the cramped wretched passengers rolled out on the pavement.

Frightful is the deeply-rooted wickedness of the human heart. We rather rejoiced than otherwise at the spectacle of sufferings we had ourselves undergone, and, as if with mocking exultation, watched the unfortunate occupants of the *coches* by slow degrees exhibiting signs of life. At first, perhaps, when the doors of the dungeon were opened, apparently a very large brown paper parcel would tumble down the steps, and stand miraculously upright in the court-yard. Then you would see it, as it were, suddenly galvanized, and displaying every appearance of life. Indeed at length this rather uncommon brown paper parcel would be seized

as with a severe ague fit—a vehement shaking from head to foot—when, lo! a huge quantity of dust, almost amounting to land enough for a little Italian principality, would fly off, and a *reboso*, with a gown, would become visible; and, finally, a señora appear, looking wild and haggard from fatigue. What is that, too, which descends the steps like a white formless mist—like the smoke which the eastern fisherman saw come slowly out of the vase in the Arabian tale! Gaze steadily, and after a while you will see that nebula resolved into two starry eyes (and perhaps a diamond-luminary or two sparkling on the fingers) as a once light and graceful señorita, lamed and bruised by the jolting she has suffered, limps away, settling her *reboso*, and coaxing her hair into a little order. Sometimes one would see the newly-arrived shampooing themselves vigorously, and extending their arms very tenderly and carefully, not to clasp them around the necks of cherished objects, waiting to welcome them, but that the poor wretched objects themselves may ascertain whether or no these members are sound and unbroken. Hark! there thunders in the Puebla Diligencia! Behold that vast violoncello-case, all travel-stained and dusty, which can with difficulty be pushed through the coach-door. Hush! a groan! the last of the

bass-strings must be broken! What a mighty instrument; what a size! the very Lablache of double basses! But, stay! that *peon* has run against it, a cloud of dust arises, and—strange metamorphosis—lo! a jolly *padre*, immoveable from cramp and weariness! He stands in everybody's way; the great American horses shove by him on this side, the bustling *cochero* on that. "Fuera! padre"—at last he totters off.

We have been to see the two magnificent volcanoes this morning, accompanied by Mr. P—— from the *azotea* of the Casa de Bazar. This hotel is kept by a brother of the far-famed M. Arago, the distinguished French astronomer and statesman. I mentioned to him that a friend of mine was acquainted with his celebrated brother. "Ah, madame, vous voulez dire mon frère l'astronome?" I said yes, and he told me it was very long indeed since he had seen that famous brother of his, and that he himself had been so long settled in Mexico, it seemed easier to him to speak Spanish than French. He is said to be very like the astronomer in appearance. He was particularly courteous and obliging, and accompanied us up to the *azotea*, which was a splendid one of great extent.

Language cannot depict the majesty and

beauty of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl that morning. The atmosphere was remarkably and peculiarly clear, even for Mexico, which was the reason of our little expedition. I had received a hasty note from Mr. ——, early in the morning, stating this fact, and recommending that we should lose no time in repairing to the *azotea*, to see the volcanoes in their fullest glory. We found, to our dismay, that this house was *azotea*less, but were advised by Mr. P—— to go to M. Arago's hotel without delay; he offering to escort us there, being acquainted with M. Arago. We lost no time, and I am indeed glad to have had so favourable an opportunity of seeing, in its greatest splendour, one of the most sublime scenes in creation. Though the sun was terribly hot there, we could not for some time tear ourselves away from the contemplation of all that august magnificence of Nature. It must be remembered that Popocatepetl far out-towers Mont Blanc.

Before we went down stairs, M. Arago asked me to look down upon his *patio*, which is really beautiful, with superb fountains and corridors, the loveliest and most graceful, and a vast profusion of large gaily-coloured Chinese lamps, or lanterns, which are lighted every evening, and must produce the most magical effect, reflected by the sparkling waters of the clear

fountains. Trees, covered with flowers in all seasons, overshadow costly tables of marble, and guard from the hot sun, in the day-time, the visitors to the Café de Bazaar adjoining the hotel. The hotel is crammed with guests.

In returning, we were pestered with beggars, especially Liliputian *léperos*, mounted like monkeys on each other's shoulders, and keeping up the most inharmonious din. The hair of one was like a huge gooseberry-bush, and she would most pertinaciously follow us, though there was hardly room for us and her shock of hair on the broad pavement: it stuck out at the sides like two great black wings, so that I was constantly coming in contact with that unpleasant hair. A little brother or sister was perched on the girl's shoulders, and helped to do the whining work. I think this spread-out forest of tangled locks was partly designed as a defensive wall to the head that seemed lost in it; for you see tormented pedestrians frequently dealing rather desperate blows at the crowns of these indefatigable persecutors—altogether forgetful of the more gentle "Perdone V." They certainly plague one out of patience. I have not seen any of the deformed *léperos* mounted on the shoulders of porters, or *peons*, that Mr. Ruxton describes—perhaps that portermanship is out of fashion.

## CHAPTER VII.

INTENTION TO CROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA, — THE CARNIVAL AT MEXICO.—MAGNIFICENCE OF THE CATHEDRAL DURING THAT FESTIVAL.—THRONGS OF PICTURESQUE PEOPLE IN THE STREETS.—THE MASKS.—A GROTESQUE EQUESTRIAN.—CARNIVAL QUIZ ON ENGLISH AND FRENCH HORSEWOMEN. — THE MEXICAN RIDING DRESS.—MEXICAN EYES.—HIGH-PACING OF MEXICAN HORSES.—MR. PARROTT INSTRUMENTAL IN SECURING CALIFORNIA TO THE AMERICANS.

I FIND we cannot, without great inconvenience and undergoing many hardships, visit the shores of the Pacific from hence. As I am most Pacifically inclined, I shall follow the advice of several of my acquaintances here and take a trip across the Isthmus of Panama, which is said to be much easier. This is a good time for going there, as the rainy season has not yet commenced.

I shall, however, proceed there as soon as possible, as before very long the beginning of the unfavourable season may be anticipated, and this will considerably, and to my great regret, curtail my visit to matchless Mexico;

for if we do not go from Vera Cruz by the next British steamer, we should be detained here so long that the bad weather would probably be set in by the time we got to Chagres, and, as there is no steamer direct to Chagres, we have to go round by the Havana, from whence I shall go probably in one of the American steamers to the Isthmus.

Here the carnival is now going on, and we have been escorted by Mr. P——, to see the cathedral in all its pomp: it was astonishingly magnificent. The quantity of gold and silver and gorgeous jewels, and ornaments of different kinds was prodigious, and the brilliancy of the whole scene was almost too dazzling. All around the great altar it seemed to have *snowed* miraculous brightness and sparkling splendours, for everything was draped with spotless white satin, and glittering with spangles and embroidery, and with solid silver.

Some very fine music was pealing through the vast church, with a noble and impressive effect. There were many priests officiating, who seemed scarcely able to move under the weight of their sumptuous dresses; crowds of people in holiday dresses were in the cathedral, and the odour of incense was delicious.

The great square was very gay. There

were throngs of women in various dresses; some with china shawls of half a hundred colours; some in country costumes, among whom shone conspicuous the brilliantly-attired Poblanas (women from Puebla), sombreroed *caballeros*, blanketed Indians, priests, children, friars, *soldados*—it was quite overflowing.

The *léperos* mustered as strong as usual, but were far too much taken up with gazing at my *châtelaine* to importune me seriously; they came to beg, but they remained to stare; so the *châtelaine* made a capital diversion. Perhaps they thought it was a choice assortment of weapons to ward them off with.

I must now speak of our drive in the *paséo* to see the masks. There were a goodly number of soldiers there to preserve order and prevent any carriage from breaking the line, and creating thereby a confusion, which, no doubt was necessary, as the crowds of carriages were extraordinary; they appeared innumerable, and so did the horsemen. It was not dull, for the masks and costumes were capital, and the variety was almost bewildering; but it was the very quietest carnival I ever saw.

One or two groups of extraordinarily-dressed individuals were much followed and shouted after, but, in general, a great silence prevailed,

and the pedestrians who thronged the promenades on each side of the drive, merely just by a bright smile, which displayed commonly a brilliant set of teeth flashing like the driven snow in the sun, expressed their pleasure and mirth. One grotesque mask, who seemed a great favourite, was a capitally represented, enormous black *bear* on horseback (no such wonderful phenomenon after all), holding the reins in the most delicate and dandy-like style, in its huge paws; and caracolling about to the great edification of all the little boys especially, in the place.

There were some masked ladies riding, with immensely long habits trailing along (they were men dressed up), floating veils and jaunty riding hats and whips; these were a quiz upon English and French equestrianesses. There were some pretended ladies also *driving themselves* in a light sort of pony carriage, *à l'Anglaise*, with bonnets and doll's parasols,—these were excellent. There were, of course, a vast number of Turks, Moors, knights, cavaliers, &c.

Of all the dresses, the most beautiful was the Mexican full dress (the riding costume) itself. The *sombreros* most profusely ornamented with the brightest of silver; the splendidly-embroidered jackets, with hanging buttons of silver;

the trowsers, also embroidered and thickly-adorned with similar silver buttons (these are slit up the leg and display an under pair, of the whitest linen beneath); and the spurs delicately and richly ornamented, and about the usual *unusual* size, were superb. Occasionally the gold-embroidered *manga* would be gracefully worn, and they sometimes display a kind of winged shoe. The horses seemed to me almost without exception beautiful: their trappings were very sumptuous and picturesque.

Amongst the lookers-on on foot, we saw many very fine faces, with the almost perpetual houri-like eye — large, dark, and lustrous — till you got rather tired of it, and might even think the pink variety (such as the ferret's, or the albino's) pleasing by way of a change. The blue, of course, is quite a relief. Not that I mean to disparage Mexican eyes, they are magnificent; but at least one thinks a little variety would do no harm. Human nature is so fond of novelty in all countries, save perhaps France, (which is so constant to ceaseless change it is quite remarkable how that surprising and consistent people retain their tastes, and seem never tired of that old game of theirs—pulling down and setting-up constitutions). I must say, however, on the promenade we saw some

lily-white *güeras* (*blondes,* fair women), most likely Germans, Americans, or English, with very blue eyes, flaxen hair, and light skins.

The quantities of splendidly-coloured China crape shawls upon the shoulders of the women who lined the sides of the road were astonishing. One would think they must have bought-up half the manufactories of China.

Tired of the scene, at length we wished to return towards home, but found we must go back the whole length of the drive first; for the soldiers would not hear of letting anybody break the ranks. It was rather tiresome, and I was only consoled by watching the beautiful horses, mostly high-stepping *Brazeadors*, that went prancing along, looking as conceited as any Christians, and twice as handsome. I have been positively assured that they teach them to raise up their fore-legs immensely high (which they almost all do) by putting on them magnifying spectacles when young, by which means the stones on the road are made to appear like large blocks in the way, and they lift up their legs in order to step over them, and so acquire the habit. I dare say the reader will laugh incredulously, but I tell him just what was told me as a fact, and I am further informed this is also constantly practised in South America.

We got home at last; but driving through the streets of Mexico just now is a trial to the skill of most coachmen; for there is a new order come out, that no one must drive within a certain number of inches of the pavement. The Mexicans themselves laugh at this curious regulation. Mr. —— said he was stopped the other day on this account, and mightily offended the official by saying he had forgotten to bring a yard measure with him, but would hang it to his carriage-wheel in future. The man was furious, and said his order must not be turned into ridicule. The muzzle of a pistol then peeped out in answer, and ended the controversy.

Victoriana came to have another portrait done of her, for her egotistical gallery, and brought another *muchacha* belonging to the house, to participate also in the benefits of a paper-and-pencil immortalization. But the amateur artist who had sketched the two previous stolen portraits, was not much in the humour to do a third, and still less to delineate the form and features of the damsel who accompanied gentle Victoriana. For the former had certainly less charms to boast of than her patroness had; and when I state that that twice-pictured damsel herself bore a rather

striking resemblance to an individual commonly known as the Knave of Clubs (and to that gentleman, too, only when afflicted with the mumps—his personal charms being by no means overpowering at any time), it will not excite much surprise. It perhaps may be conceived that Sir Peter Lely might have felt a little hesitation with respect to admitting this new candidate for pictorial honours into his gallery of beauties (had she lived in his day), and it is a melancholy fact that the amateur artist before alluded to, looked particularly blank at the not very charming prospect before her.

Victoriana, notwithstanding her likeness to the knave of clubs, *en petite santé*, had at least a very pleasing and gay good-humoured countenance, but her poor friend was the most forlorn and doleful-looking damsel you ever beheld (so it was mumps and dumps); and with her on one side and Victoriana on the other, V—— looked like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy, and ought to have done the whole group, thus including herself, in these characters.

To please them, at last she did two little rough sketches, sufficiently flattering to both these mulligatawny-complexioned nymphs.

Then the merry one looked contemplative and absorbed in dreaming and delighted thought, as she gazed on her own picture; and the dismal one turned merry. In short, Tragedy looked very comic, and Comedy rather tragic and serious; perhaps the latter was secretly plotting how to run off with both sketches for her private collection in some corner of the scullery devoted to high art.

We had a farewell visit from our friend Mr. Parrott, who is to start on his return to California almost immediately. I have heard, not from himself, but from others, that it was owing to his energy and promptitude that California was secured to the Americans. He sent an express to the American commander-in-chief of the squadron in the Pacific announcing the war, when there was an idea that Great Britain would attempt to take California under its protection—an idea arising from the circumstance of there being a large British force concentrated near, and indeed at anchor off the port of Mazatlan at the time. Notwithstanding there was considerable difficulty in forwarding this express, Mr. Parrott contrived, with great adroitness, to send it through safely in five days, the usual time being ten days. This delivered the first news

of the war to the United States forces in the Pacific.

Very shortly afterwards California was occupied without any opposition or resistance from us, by Commodore Sloat and the force under his command. He had hardly planted the American flag in the territory when our eighty-gun ship, the "Collingwood," (admiral Sir G. Seymour) ran into the harbour of Monterey; but if any designs were entertained of frustrating the plan of the Americans, the time was already past when any obstacle could successfully be thrown in their way, and the "Collingwood" almost immediately (when the state of affairs was ascertained) took her departure.

Of course I cannot answer for the entire correctness of this account, but I believe it is substantially true. Mr. Parrott, during part of the Mexican war, acted as a volunteer. He told me he had never enjoyed better health than when undergoing all kinds of hardships and privations, and subsisting entirely on rations of fat pork; but then the charming Mexican climate must be taken into account.

## CHAPTER VIII.

DEPARTURE FOR VERA CRUZ.—THREATENED ACCIDENT TO THE DILIGENCE.—LAST LOOK AT MEXICO AND ITS EARLY STIRRERS. —THE LITTLE PENON —A MAGNIFICENT VIEW.—PASSENGERS BY THE DILIGENCE.—SPLENDID SOMBREROS.—THE ESCORT OF LANCERS. — MEXICAN ROBBERS — OF WHAT CLASS COMPOSED. —SOME OF THEIR EXPLOITS. — ESCORTS ALLEGED TO BE SOMETIMES ROBBERS.—ARRIVAL AT RIO FRIO.—MR. AND MRS. G———.—THE PLAIN OF PUEBLA.—MELINCHE.—THE PYRAMID OF CHOLULA. — ITS EARLY HISTORY. — ITS HEIGHT AND APPEARANCE.—CHAMBER DISCOVERED IN THE PYRAMID.—WHAT IT CONTAINED.—ARRIVAL AT PUEBLA.

We were both quite unhappy to leave beautiful and most enchanting Mexico. Even our parting with good-natured, kind Victoriana, was quite affecting! After telling us how much she *siento'd* our departure, she flung her arms and hair about us most affectionately—those mahogany arms and that ebon hair almost strangled us.

We left Mexico at about half-past four o'clock in the morning. I found, during the time we were there, that one attains a great proficiency in the art of sleeping in that clear

elastic air, and on that morning we dressed and prepared for our journey between dreaming and waking. While I saw the trunks and packages busily vanishing one after the other, I remained in such a state of "masterly inactivity," that I scarcely cared, and could hardly rouse myself, even when those dreadful sounds "the diligence is ready," broke upon my ears. However, awake or asleep we must go, and we hastily passed along the deserted corridors, a dreary procession in a state of semi-consciousness, mechanically following our cherished carpet-bags, and well-beloved boxes.

Having seen their "old familiar faces" looking down upon us from the mountain heights of the diligence-summit, we clambered into that imposing vehicle. The companion coach was ready, hard by, and off we started, but soon stopped again, with a jerk that almost or quite severed soul and body, but, fortunately the second jerk, on starting once more, brought them together again.

In the mean time, we felt naturally a little bewildered and confused. What had happened? Surely the *ladrones* had not lassoed the *cochero* on the box of the diligence, in the very streets of Mexico. Or had that careless functionary driven the wheels within the quarter

of an inch proscribed by law? And were we all about to be summoned before some dread tribunal, to answer for our hair's breadth scrape (not *'scape*)? We knew not, nor did we ever know, for on we plunged in the half lamp-lit darkness (they have huge swinging lamps slung from corner to corner), and away we trotted as merrily as before this little incident, which remained clothed in impenetrable mystery. It served thoroughly to awaken us, however, so that we took our last look of queenly Mexico with very wide-awake eyes.

How quiet seemed those streets, generally so alive with busy thousands! The *sereno* was about to make his exit from the scene, and the coal-seller, the *carbonero* his entry: he would probably be soon followed by the *mantequilleros* (lard-vendors), and the *lecheras* (milk-women), the *carnicero* (butcher), Indian *cambista* (exchanger), *tortilleros*, and the tender duck-vendors, whose cry is "Oh, my soul, my soul! hot ducks!" (but I believe this is an evening cry), *buhoneros* (pedlars), the honey and *requeson*-sellers, and *aguadores*. A remarkably picturesque class are these last. They are water-carriers, and have great earthen jars, slung at their backs by a strap, which passes like a *bandeau* across the forehead.

Then a mere trifle of a jar, as they seem to consider it (we should find it rather weighty and unwieldy), swings carelessly in front, to balance the bigger one, by a band put over the top of the head.

The sunrise was lovely, and when we looked back at the valley of Mexico in the golden light of morning, the prospect was, indeed, all that one can dream of the beautiful and the sublime. It was enough to electrify a mummy or an oyster with admiration.

I forgot to say, when we reached the barrier of the city, we found an escort of soldiers waiting for us, who immediately ranged themselves on either side of the *coche,* and cantered leisurely along with us. It was after quitting the shores of fair Lake Tezcuco, that we turned to the south, and after changing horses at a place called the little Peñon (a hill standing in a solitary position between the Lakes of Chalco and Xochimilco), we continued our course to Ayotla.

At this point it was that General Scott's army quitted the main road to Mexico, and turning round the Peñon Grande to the south of the city, followed the opposite shore of the Chalco Lake. It was near this, at the base of the soaring Peñon, that we bade adieu

to the glorious valley, and began to toil up the ascent of the mountain.

We had a fresh relay of horses at a flourishing-looking *hacienda* of considerable size, on a shelf of the mountain, and it was looking back from that spot that the prospect of the unrivalled valley, which we had lately left, was magnificent. Looking towards Tenango and Ameca, we beheld a vast plain where stretched fields of verdant corn, and shone out stately *haciendas* and the white walls of populous hamlets. Chalco spread its many-glittering waveless waters beneath us, and through some chasmy opening in the surrounding hills you marked Tezcuco, holding its sparkling mirror to the morning. Onward and upward then, till that earthly heaven, the valley, opened all its apparently world-wide scene before you—while the cloud-belted giant mountains—some with their foreheads dazzling as very constellations with perpetual snow — seemed placed there expressly to draw the glances of mortals to the skies, lest they should haply forget them among such endless glories and such bewilderment of beauty around.

Not long after this exquisite view we got deep into the cold pine forest, which, I suppose, is the beginning of the tract called the "Black Forest;" and we were glad to draw our cloaks

well around us ; the air felt very sharp. We reached, at length, those savage-looking defiles, which are said to be the places most haunted by robbers of any in all Mexico, except, perhaps, the country about Perote. Our gallant little squadron of lancers took occasionally some short cuts in the hilly pine woods, but kept, however, within hail. We watched them with some little anxiety ; and the party, in general, was observed to be rather more cheerful when their gaudy and gracefully-wreathed *sarapes*, and long lances, with streaming scarlet pennons, were very close to the sides of the carriage.

I have not mentioned, on coming to Mexico we had passed a tree under which a whole set of robbers had been shot the week before. I did not observe it on our return, but it was somewhere, I think, in this forest. Our diligence was nearly full : we occupied one side, and besides ourselves there was an agreeable and very *poli* old French gentleman, a Mexican, with his son, natives of Puebla, and returning there from a visit to the capital; and a young Mexican gentleman who had been educated at New York, spoke English remarkably well, and seemed imbued with much admiration of "The States," which he in courtesy called the *United* ones.

(Forgive me, my dear American friends, but

just now, when you are so fiercely quarrelling, it is allowable to say this, is it not? One of their printers the other day unintentionally *anagrammized* the word, and printed it "*Untied* States." However, the Americans I have seen in Mexico seem to think, in general, all these vexatious disagreements will blow over.)

The French gentleman and two of the Mexicans were carefully nursing on their knees splendid *sombreros*—to be sported on high-days and holidays, I suppose. They took off the covers which protected their treasures from dust and dirt, and they were extremely handsome, of the most delicate materials, and exquisitely decorated with silver. One had the costliest little silver dog on it possible, as an ornament, to join the silver band, if I recollect rightly; it was so beautifully executed it almost looked alive, and yet was only about the size of the famous little dog in the fairy tale that, couched in a nut, betrayed its whereabouts by a sharp little "Yap, yap." After exhibiting them to our admiring view (I believe they thought our curiosity was excited by the mysterious way in which they were folded and enwrapped), they —especially the Frenchman—kept up a very animated conversation, in Spanish, about the theatres, the great carnival-ball, and so on. How happy the Frenchman seemed, talking of

ballets and operas, and of his seeing Cerito at Paris, and Carlotta Grisi, Marie Taglioni, and half a hundred more!

A Parisian is a Parisian everywhere, and always; for, except occasional visits to France, it appeared this gentleman had been settled in Mexico twenty or thirty years; but he was, notwithstanding that, apparently as much a citizen of Paris as if he had never penetrated into the country farther than the Bois de Boulogne. Every now and then they stopped in the middle of an *entrechat* (that is, the description of one), or left poor Carlotta Grisi balancing herself, with great grace, and twirling upon one leg in a very difficult *pas* and posture, to throw a sidelong glance out of the window to see whether those who were riding so close to the carriage were lancers or *ladrones*, and, after this brief investigation, resumed their discourse, till higher and more rugged rocks, and a deeper and ever deepening gloom of crowding pines, caused another reconnoitring look, and many an uneasy after-peep, cast "slantendicularly" out of the loop-holes of our travelling fortress.

One of our lancers was a negro; another seemed to have entirely run to mustachios; a third, of a light copper-colour, had swathed

himself up in his cloak like an Egyptian mummy (evidently suffering from the cold severely); a fourth seemed to consist chiefly of lance and spurs, and the point of a bluish nose —the points of the one and the other equally sharp. The fifth was a splendid cavalier, whose spirited horse curvetted about in the most graceful style—but I will not go on particularizing. Suffice it that all were *sarapé'd* up almost to the eyes, and that altogether they had a most imposing effect, and a highly picturesque appearance.

Their uniform was multiform, and of all the colours of the rainbow: their complexions varied almost as much, and their horses were not behindhand in variety of hues—greys, blacks, *alazans* (sorrel-coloured), piebalds, *priétos* (dark brown), and others. I believe, in addition to their lances, they are armed with holster-pistols and *escopettes*.

With regard to the robbers, we are told they are usually very humane and often courteous. If the accounts we hear of them, from even *Mexicans*, be true, they ought to be so, as they are frequently persons belonging to good society, who having gambled away their property, "take to the road," temporarily, as a means of recruiting their

shattered fortunes. Gambling is the curse of Mexico.

These distinguished marauders appear to consider this a sort of guerilla warfare, which is not derogatory or degrading—a singular delusion, to say the least of it. A colonel in the army, we were told, was shot a little while ago for heading a desperate troop of brigands who plundered a diligence, and this is said to be by no means an isolated case; but that, after all, may be an exaggeration. One thing appears certain; they are generally exceedingly civil and considerate towards passengers who at once give up their money and valuables.

We were told that they have occasionally robbed a party of priests; and then, having ordered the poor fat *padres* to lie on their rubicund faces in the dust—*la boca á tierra*, while they ransacked their trunks, — they have insisted on the panting, puffing ecclesiastics giving them absolution for their sacrilegious sin. One day, it seems, they attacked a large party of actors and actresses returning from a visit to Mexico. They seized their heterogeneous wardrobe, and were perfectly enchanted at the gorgeousness of the dresses, glittering with tinsel and spangles. They could not resist the delight of dressing

themselves up in their brilliant costumes; and while one accoutred himself like a Roman senator, hanging the false flowing beard (which he should have tied to his ell-long moustachios) behind like a dragoon's horsetail to his helmet, another attired himself in the graceful costume of the Sylphide, with a wreath of white roses stuck on the top of his great bushy head, and the little gauzy wings, fastened on to the herculean shoulders, so that he looked like a vast cherub booted and spurred — at any rate, we may imagine such mistakes were made. A party of dragoons galloped up, rescued the heroes and heroines of the buskin, and seized for summary punishment the Sylphides and senators.

We passed numerous crosses on our road through these gloomy regions, which indicated where murders had been committed; but these might be relics of the olden time. As for us, we had immense, unbounded confidence in the lances and moustachios, which had so warlike an appearance, galloping at our side. They seemed a gallant set altogether, and determined to put to flight any number of *ladrones*. They were very active and vigilant, and spied about for brigands, as if they

would rather have liked a little skirmish than not.

Travellers, however, have sometimes told me in Mexico, that they do not place much dependence on them. They say, in the first place, when not employed as escorts, they themselves become the robbers. That trifling circumstance matters not at all, I think, or is rather favourable than otherwise; for they must know the haunts and habits of their sometime comrades particularly well. And then it is so seldom now that travellers carry any real valuables with them on these dangerous roads, that their pay and gratuities as protectors must be in general a more certain source of livelihood to them, than their booty as banditti. Besides, occasionally, travellers must be allowed to go safely, otherwise they would more and more restrict themselves to a mere change of linen and a few cigars. And then it is the interest of these *soldados* to keep up the confidence of *viagêros* in escorts, for thus they are always sure of some employment and emolument, either as defenders or defiers of the law. No; I am resolved that nothing shall shake my full dependence on those red pennons and purple points of noses.

At last we drew up at the door of the

*posada* at Rio Frio, which is situated a short distance below the summit of this uncomfortable pass, without having seen the slightest *soupçon* of a robber, to my great delight. The *Almuerzo* was already prepared, and we had wherewithal in our purses to pay for it to boot. There was a complete hurricane at Rio Frio.

In the companion coach were Mr. and Mrs. G——, and all their children (Mr. G—— had been a travelling companion of ours to Mexico). His wife is a French lady, very pleasing-looking, and extremely fair, with light-coloured hair. She travelled, *à la Mexicaine*, without any bonnet, but, however, not with a *reboso*,—in short, with nothing at all on her head: this must have been unpleasant in the clouds of dust that were whirling about. When they got out to go to breakfast, two or three little blue-eyed children were blown away like feathers, and the poor nurse was running after them in dismay, and waltzing with the wind in the wildest fashion. I remained in the diligence and breakfasted on biscuits. I had rather have had *bear* for breakfast, as we had sometimes on the Mississippi.

Before we started, Mr. G—— flew (the wind being favourable) to the side of the carriage,

and told me they were going to Puebla, where we should all stop for the night, and I anticipated the pleasure of making Mrs. G——'s acquaintance there; but fate decided otherwise. But now, the horses being to — *vamos*, the *coche* thunders along amid the roaring of the wind, and soon we enter another somewhat perilous and rugged pass—but this opens on the fair and fertile table-land of stately Puebla.

Boldly stands the peak of Malinche alone upon the plain, and it is the first spectacle that presents itself (and a very noble one too) on quitting the shade of the woods. The table-land, over which our road then led, descends very gradually to Puebla, which is a distance of about forty miles. It is covered with maize and wheat; but there does not seem to be any division into hedged fields. Here and there you see *haciendas* and churches and gardens and ruins. These last struck us much when we first came from "The States," where such a thing is as rare as a Cape jessamine would be at the North Pole. Popocatapetl looked awfully beautiful and magnificent from there, and Iztaccihuatl did not yield much to it in grandeur.

I believe one of Cortez's great battles was

fought very near this volcano of Malinche ; but I get a little puzzled with the number of volcanoes and mountains, and the Aztec and American battles—Cortez and General Scott, " El grande Emperador Montezuma " and gallant " Old Zack."

We soon came in sight of the wonderful and huge pyramid of Cholula, built by the Aztecs; it is supposed as a *Teocalli.* A temple to Quatzalcoatl formerly stood on it ; but now it is crowned by a Christian chapel dedicated to the Madonna.

Some antiquaries have conjectured it served for a cemetery as well as a sanctuary of religion. It is thought by Humboldt to bear a striking resemblance to the temple of Belus, and some other oriental edifices. It is believed by the Indians to be hollow; and they have a curious tradition that while Cortez remained at Cholula, a number of armed warriors were concealed in it, who were to have attacked, suddenly and unexpectedly, the Spanish army. It appears to be true, at any rate, that Cortez, having some cause for distrust, or some secret information of such an intention, assaulted in a very unlooked-for manner the inhabitants of Puebla, and put six thousand to the sword.

Humboldt says the base of this mighty

pyramid is almost *double* that of the great pyramid of Cheops in Egypt ; its height, however, is not so great. It is said to be constructed most exactly in the direction of the cardinal points. It consists of four distinct terraces or pyramidical stories, and is entirely built with alternate layers of clay and *adobes* (sun-dried bricks).

The pyramid is partly covered on the eastern side by the spontaneous growth of vegetation, some prickly pears, and different small shrubs, giving it, at a little distance, rather the appearance of a *natural* abrupt conical-shaped hill. It seems to equal in its elevation, which is entirely *artificial*, and in noble form, the range of hills that stands in the front of it, or the height of Tlaloc that towers behind it. You ascend to the platform on the summit by a flight of about one hundred and twenty steps.

When the present high road was made from Puebla to Mexico, the first story of the Cholula pyramid, it is said, was cut through, and a square chamber was brought to light, which had no outlet, and which was supported by beams of cypress, and singularly constructed, each succeeding course of bricks passing beyond the lower. In this square chamber were found

two skeletons, some basaltic idols, and a few painted vases varnished in a curious manner.

It is said also, that there are fragmentary masses of *adobes* and clay in the immediate vicinity of the pyramid, in one of which, that bore the aspect of an old fortress, were found some bones of men, earthenware, and warlike arms of the Aztecs. Plantations of aloes, corn-fields, and lovely gardens, and cultivated grounds environ Cholula. Formerly there was a great Aztec city of Cholula.

With regard to this extraordinary pyramid, I think the people who could be bold enough to become mountain-builders within sight of those stupendous volcanoes, Popocatapetl and Iztaccihuatl, and so many other mighty mountains, deserve much praise for their almost sublime audacity. The very idea was amazingly grand and daring; but when you add to this that they succeeded in leaving to future generations a work that is strikingly noble and magnificent, even in so trying a position, it must be conceded that those barbaric tribes have some claims on the admiration of posterity. I hope when we arrive at Vera Cruz to see a drawing of the pyramid by Lord M. Kerr. He intended to devote some little time to making a sketch of it.

We lost sight of Cholula at last, and crossed the Tlascala river, and then drew near to the many churches and towers and domes and convents of populous Puebla. Just as we were about to enter the town, we passed the second diligence, whose huge form loomed almost like another Cholula on wheels, in the dusk, with its rather tapering load of trunks, portmanteaus, baskets, and carpet bags. We imagined they had stopped to have the harness adjusted, as we thought we saw some shadowy figures standing by the horses. However, our *cochero* stopped to make no inquiries, nor to afford any assistance,—on he drove to the hotel.

There were a good many promenaders, probably just returned from the Alameda, in the streets, and some cavaliers—I believe masked —for the carnival was not over; but the light was not brilliant enough for us to see well. The magnificent cathedral seemed heaving its giant frame to the sky, till you might almost fancy that those angelic visitants, who were supposed to be its builders, were lifting it from the earth to a more blessed region. We drove through the Grand Plaza, and soon found ourselves dashing into the busy courtyard of the hotel.

We asked for *quartos* immediately, and

were informed they had but one for our whole party. While I was talking to the superintendent, a person came up to me, and began speaking to me in a language that appeared to me a very strange one indeed. I concluded it might possibly be Poblano-Spanish, with perhaps a slight mixture of some Indian dialect, and I began to reply in Spanish, to the best of my ability. But my new acquaintance shook her head, and made a fresh trial, and I then discovered this unknown tongue was intended for—English!

She was a German (and, by the flickering lamp-light, I saw she was very fair and light-haired, and Saxon-looking), and had come to Puebla to meet Mrs. G—— there, to whom she had recently engaged herself as housekeeper. She was in great trepidation at their non-arrival, and feared some accident had happened. I told her all I knew, and we agreed that they would probably soon arrive.

Another *coche* came rattling in, and down rushed the poor German, hoping the belated travellers were in it; but she soon returned, looking very disconsolate, saying—"dat not dem." Brief as Bem's letter to, or of the Ban—"Bem Ban baum!" Shortly afterwards, I ascertained that they had sent to the hotel

to say their diligence had broken down, and to beg some sort of carriage might be despatched to bring them and their luggage immediately.

In the mean time, I had secured *quartos*. Mr. C——, an English gentleman whom we had met in Mexico, most obligingly gave up his room to us, which was a good-sized one, and got a small den somewhere. The maids were left in possession of a scrambling-looking apartment that had been destined for all of us, and finding the poor German housekeeper (who was not in the least *like* a stately functionary of that description in looks, for she appeared rather *svelte* and delicate and pretty) had no apartment, they invited her to share theirs.

We were not sorry to see a good dinner make its appearance, which was soon followed by its disappearance; for we were very hungry. After dinner, foaming chocolate was brought, and after chocolate we would gladly have sought repose, but we felt anxious to see Mr. and Mrs. G—— and their children arrive in safety, and remained up for some time; but still there were no signs of them. So V—— went to bed, and I a little while after, as we had to be up *very* early in the morning. I was unfortunate enough thus to miss making

acquaintance with Mrs. G——, who, I was told in Mexico, is a very nice person indeed.

Just as our door was closed for the night, hasty steps were heard on the stairs, and in the broad, half-open gallery, sounds of voices speaking French and English were distinctly audible. They had, then, arrived. My maid told me, the next day, that she had seen them, and that they had been detained so long in consequence of there being no conveyance at hand to send for them. I believe they walked to the hotel, and regretted not having done so at once; for the first messenger Mr. G—— sent, never took the message at all, and the poor children were naturally wearied out with waiting so long after their fatiguing journey. I believe, however, they were to rest a little at Puebla, before they proceeded to their new home; for, if I remember rightly, Mr. G—— has given up the superintendentship of certain Guanajuata mines, and undertaken some not far from Xalapa, for which he is to receive a much more liberal salary.

## CHAPTER IX.

DEPARTURE FROM PUEBLA.—ACAJETE.—EL PINAL.— ALARM OF LADRONES.—DISCOMFORTS OF ROUGH ROADS EXEMPLIFIED.—PULQUE.—ITS TASTE.—THE PLANT FROM WHICH IT IS EXTRACTED.—MODE OF EXTRACTING IT.—MONDE DE PIZANO.—ARRIVAL AT PEROTE.—COLDNESS OF THAT PLACE IN WINTER.

On the following morning we had to rise before three o'clock, and so were obliged to give up visiting the Celestial Cathedral of Puebla.

Away we thundered through the deserted streets, and suddenly came to a dead stop. A little alarm, lest we had "come to grief," like poor Mr. and Mrs. G——, was quickly dispelled by discovering the *cochero* had dropped his cloak; so the conductor had to go with a lantern, hunting in the streets for it. The horses fidgetted, the passengers grumbled, the time (as it has a habit of doing) sped on; but presently the conductor arrived and brought with him the lost treasure, and off we rattled again to the east, to meet the morning.

We rolled along on the elevated table-land, feeling a little cold, and particularly sleepy.

We arrived at last at Amozoque, which is said to be swarming with robbers ; but we were so fortunate as to see none. From this place you ascend by a very gentle inclination, to the summit of the separating ridge beyond Perote. Boldly and proudly towered the great mountain walls of the table-land.

The next relay was at Acajete. At one of these places we tasted some spring water, said to be wonderfully fine, but we did not think it so very remarkable. It is reported that a large gang of *ladrones* conceal themselves often among the ravines and *barrancas* of the Acajete mountains. I am happy to say they did not leave their ambush. We drove on pretty rapidly past thickets and shelving rocks and frowning precipices, and stopped to change horses at El Pinal, on the northern side of the mountain, a large and fine *hacienda*, and then rattled speedily along to Nopaluca where the *diligencia* breakfasted.

I do not remember accurately where, but *somewhere* not very far from this, there was an alarm of *ladrones* given in the diligence. A number of mounted horsemen, apparently well armed, made their appearance ; and one, who looked like a chief or captain among them, galloped tolerably near, and seemed to be

busily occupied in reconnoitring our carriages, the passengers, and the possible booty.

The French gentleman seemed convinced they were—"Les voleurs! oui, ma foi, les voilà, tenez, il faut—Mais, non—attendez, voyons un peu.—Eh, oui! c'est le même ;" and elevating his voice, leaning half out of the carriage, taking off his sombrero, and waving his hand, he called, " Como! Señor, quién se lo hubiera imaginado? Se lo hubieran esperado ? Pardiez! Me alegro de ver á V.! Celebro mucho ver á V. Me atreveré á pedir adonde vá V. ?" Many compliments passed between them, and after a number of mutual civilities and salutations, and a perfect lightning flash of brilliant teeth, shown by the gracious smiles of the caballero, away he dashed from the side of the carriage, still bowing to the señoras, and being joined by his companions, was soon lost to sight. The French gentleman told us, he had met him accidentally somewhere, and been enabled to show him some trifling kindness and civility, and that on recognizing him so luckily, he reminded the caballero of it, and for his sake were thus saved our watches and coins.

By this time we were shaken almost out of all knowledge; one of our bonnets looked like a small coal-scuttle in convulsions ; a wretched

Mexican had his sombrero almost smashed into his face; another had his visage knocked about with many whacks, pleasingly diversifying his olive complexion with patches of black and blue. When we attempted to talk, it was very much like speaking in *entrechats*, our poor words had to cut such extraordinary capers in our throats. The unhappy Monsieur seemed at one moment like an Indian juggler about to bolt a sword, scabbard and all, or a boa constrictor preparing to swallow its victim, and beginning with one limb at first. The poor man had only got his neighbour's elbow in his mouth, which another jolt almost sent half way down his throat.

Our conversation was necessarily fitful.—"Mais où donc est mon chapeau? Cette voiture fait danser tout d'une maniere,—Oh! je vous en prie,—Ne vous derangez pas, Monsieur." But Monsieur just at that moment was very much "derangé;" he was tossed as in a blanket to the highest roof, and down again, and probably alighted upon the identical *chapeau* they were looking for. "No le incomoda á V. este paquete, Señor?" And "este paquete," at the same moment of time, lodged itself uncrupulously on the nose of the civil questioner. "Hombre! verdaderamente los caminos no son

muy buenos, pero, qué hermosa vista! Qué magnifico pais! Parece . . ." But the poor wretch just then had his hat jammed over his eyes which stopped his rapture. Shortly after, you must imagine an immensely polite conversation going forward. The French Monsieur discovers that the Mexican Señor is going to Xalapa as well as himself, and is charmed. "Tendré el placer de gozar de su compañia de V., porque yo tambien . . ." And while thus saying, even the Señor hits him such a terrible whack, by an involuntary butt with his head, that the wretched victim is doubled up for half-an-hour by it.

At last we learned to watch for the coming jolt, when the horses or mules were all at full gallop, and the road rather worse than usual. At the first symptoms of plunges and shocks, conversation would be generally as suddenly stopped, as if the whole company had unexpectedly been gagged: and some would screw their mouths into the tightest of button-holes, others open theirs wide (the wisest plan, which I can safely recommend, as it saves your teeth from being jammed together in lock-jaw fashion, or played upon like castanets), gasping "like a cat-fish with a sock-dolager hook in its mouth," but all exhibited countenances of intense horror.

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We almost felt sometimes as if our heads had been jolted off, and re-jolted on again, happy if each got his own head back: what a shame it would have been if one person had acquired two, and aped Austria's double-headed eagle!

We tried some *pulque* for the first time, when changing horses at one of the *posadas*, during this journey: the first time I ever saw others drinking it, I thought they were draining large draughts of new milk (for it looks exactly like it), and admired much the teetotalism of that knot of *arrieros*, and *rancheros*, and *mozos*. Then and there I was informed it was the famous *pulque* they were so industriously imbibing.

I had not at this time courage to taste it, for I heard an alarming account of it; but on our return we all tasted and sipped. H—— and W—— thought it like indifferent small beer; I thought it like nothing exactly, but that it stood "alone in its glory,"—matchlessly horrible. But I can just imagine that you might get used to it in about a hundred and fifty years, and in a hundred more learn to like it: but, on second thoughts, I think this is a little exaggeration, and you might by possibility become an earlier convert. I must also add, to give the stuff its due, that we were told that this was very inferior *pulque*, and there-

fore we must not condemn universal *pulque* after tasting such a bad specimen. It is said to be but very little intoxicating, and exceedingly nutritious, so it deserves well of its country; and its countrymen have reason to prize it, and sing and say, as Mr. Ruxton tells us they sometimes do, — "Viva nosotros y pulque."

The Maguey (*Agave Americana*), from which this beverage is extracted, is an aloe, and is very extensively cultivated in Mexico. The most famous plantations of it are in the vicinity of Cholula, and also those in the Llanos de Apam; there are many places besides celebrated for excellent *pulque*, as the valley of Teluco, where the *pulque* is supplied from immense Maguey grounds near Lerma, and numerous others. The plant grows wild in every part of Mexico, but is not cultivated or milked, *i.e.*, drained of its precious sap, except in certain districts. I should imagine, however, the cultivation of it is fast spreading, as the consumption appears to be perfectly enormous. We saw immense fields of it in many parts during our journey.

The process of preparing for the supply of *pulque* is curious. When the central shoot, which would naturally produce the flower, is

on the eve of making its appearance, it is anticipated, and rather harshly nipped in the bud, by a deep incision being made, and the whole heart being taken out, as one of those most savage and merciless barbarians of civilized life, called dentists, extract a tooth, by the roots. This operation is generally performed by the Indians, whose forefathers had a little knack of doing a similar service to human subjects, but not with such beneficial results. Having thus extracted *el corazon*, only the stout outside rind is left, which acts the part of a natural cistern, or large basin, both deep and wide, into which the sap, which dame Nature designed for the sustenance of the immense central shoot, oozes perpetually in vast quantities. Then comes the experienced Indian (athirst already, and fired by thoughts of coming *pulque*) and hacks away the leaves on one side, so as to make a regular breach in these vegetable battlements, and thrusts in a long gourd (*acojote*) whose lesser end is finished off by a horn, while a small square orifice is left at the other extremity, to which his mouth is applied, while by the force of suction, he extracts the sap, which sap, before fermentation takes place, is named *agua-miel* (honey-water), and, in accordance with

its name, has an extremely sweet taste, and is quite destitute of that extraordinary smell (not much unlike that of eggs in the sere and yellow leaf of their existence) which appears afterwards to form one of its peculiar charms. The sap is allowed to ferment for about fifteen days, when it becomes what they term *madre pulque* (the mother of *pulque*), and this is distributed—but only in niggardly quantities —among the troughs which are to receive daily accessions of *agua-miel.* It acts as a kind of leaven, fermentation immediately begins, and in about a day the *pulque* is ready for drinking. "Viva nosotros y pulque!"

From this plant is also prepared a horribly strong brandy (which we have *not* tasted) called Mexical (or Mezcal or Aguardiente de Maguey), which is but too highly approved of in general in this country. A more interesting subject in connection with it, is the use the Aztecs made of its leaves in manufacturing the paper on which their hieroglyphics were written, some fragments of which have survived. They now make of the more fibrous portions, a stout thread, or twine, called *pita,* which is formed into ropes, and made use of in the mines, and as cordage for ships on the Pacific coast: it is said to be very strong and lasting. In

short, the Maguey seems to play an important part in Mexico altogether.

There were a few rocky peaks not far from our road; but dreaming of the Tierra Caliente—the world of flowers and beauty we were soon to see—we did not care much to gaze at the inhospitable looking landscape, save where afar the Coffre de Perote (whose Indian name is Nauhcampapetl) gleamed out, and mighty Orizaba raised his refulgent crest.

We came at length to La Venta de Soto, near which towers a huge pyramidal peak of rock of perhaps three thousand feet high,—Monte de Pizarro. From its gloomy clefts and hollows and hiding-places, it is reported *los ladrones* often start to terrify and rob passengers. We afterwards entered into that lonely rugged volcanic region, which had struck us much in coming, but which looked particularly wild, bleak, and gloomy by the evening light, which was beginning by slow degrees to fade off.

The black frowning lava scattered in broken and confused beds, as if earthquakes had helped in those olden convulsions of Nature, to produce wilder confusion, looked dreary indeed. Somewhere in Mexico, it is said, a whole population was buried alive (as at Pompeii, I suppose), and this might well be the spot; for many

of these huge blocks of lava look like giant tomb-stones. There were a few dilapidated *cabañas*, or *chozas*, (huts and cottages) left to decay, as if their inhabitants could no longer endure the oppressive gloom of this stern and savage region. Acheron should flow through these melancholy congenial scenes. I believe it is called "Mal pais" (the bad country).

After a dismal drive across this cheerless territory, with only the grandeur of the Coffre de Perote to admire, we arrived at the town. The fortress, where the commandant is our friend, the Coronel Aguado, frowned down upon us, and we soon galloped into the courtyard belonging to that well-remembered collection of dens and cellars, which is called an hotel, in Perote. I must not omit to mention, that we had passed innumerable crosses, each showing where some poor wretch lies buried. The people here, as before, refused us a separate dinner at first, and afterwards relented, and sent us a very good one. Before dinner, one of our *campagnons de voyage*, Mr. C——, knocked at our immense barn doors, and wanted to know if he could be of any use in sending us dinner. I went out to speak to him, and was surprised at

the metamorphosis the bleak air of Siberia-like Perote had wrought in him—he was of a tint hovering between azure and prussian blue, and his teeth were literally chattering in his head.

After dinner we had some delicious chocolate. We had a most obliging and good-natured woman to wait on us, with very sweet and pleasing manners, quite too good and amiable for such a wild, bleak, drear, robber-haunted place. She seemed like a disguised princess in Perote. If so, she was the most condescending one in the world, for she ran to and fro with the greatest alacrity, bringing us all sorts of dishes, stewed, and fried, and boiled.

I was half asleep when she came to clear away the things and bring chocolate. I told her I was horribly tired (for a wonder, for I very seldom am so with travelling). "Y con razon, Señorita—" (you must know everybody here is called *señorita*—no matter if she has a hundred children, and is a hundred herself, she is still called miss and child, *niña*. You may hear sometimes a little beggar girl entreat a decrepit, toothless, bent-double *child* of seventy, to give her *caridad*,) "con razon, los caminos son tan malos, tan detestables."

She told me she had sometimes been to

Puebla, and was always half dead after it. I asked her if it was not terribly cold at Peroté in the winter; "O si, muchissima." She said the snow was often very deep for a long time together. I glanced round the room and thought "poor travellers!" in order to have any light in the daytime, they must have their door open; and there is no stove or provision of any sort for giving warmth to the desolate dens! She told me they kept themselves warm in the kitchen; but altogether a Peroté winter must be a dreary affair.

After a little more conversation, she went to find a lamp for us, and returned speedily with a very promising-looking one. She begged us then to lose no time in going to bed, as we should have to get up at about two o'clock in the morning; therefore, in her soft musical voice, she counselled us to retire immediately, "Se lo suplica á V." We took her advice, and slept well till a terrifying rat-a-tatting at our prison gates aroused us from slumber, and we hastily dressed by the light of the lamp and a *véla*, which our kind friend, the disguised princess, had left us.

My maid told me there was an immense party last evening at dinner, for a great number of Priests and Sisters of Charity had arrived, and

there were hardly tables and dinner enough to accommodate them all. She said these Sisters of Charity appeared all healthy, stout, hard-working people ; and their rough, coarse hands seemed to be accustomed to somewhat severe labour. She understood from an American there, that they had just come from Spain.

## CHAPTER X.

DEPARTURE FROM PEROTE. — MAGNIFICENT VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS.—IMPRESSIONS CAUSED BY THEM.—THE BEAUTY OF THE APPROACH TO XALAPA DESCRIBED.—THE MIRAGE.—APPEARANCE OF INVERTED HOUSES.—HOTEL DE DILIGENCIAS. —VISIT TO A CHURCH.—NEGOTIATION WITH THE MOZO TOUCHING THE SARAPE AND THE AMERICAN BLANKET —NUMBERS OF FRIARS AND NUNS FROM SPAIN.—ARRIVAL AT VERA CRUZ. —A CURIOUS FACT IN RELATION TO DR. GUTZLAFF, THE MISSIONARY TO CHINA.—ARRIVAL OF THE STEAMER FOR THE HAVANA.

BITTERLY cold was it when we took our places in the diligencia, the morning we bade adieu to scowling Peroté, after having a *desayuno* of coffee and chocolate, and a small roll, brought in compassionately by one of the *mozos*, for, of course, our poor *princesa* was still locked in slumber.

We rolled heavily through the gloomy, lifeless streets, which echoed with the tramp, tramp, of our eight mules. Most magnificently shone the stars, like so many diamond moons; but they looked almost as cold as ourselves. On we went, through the star-lit, piercing,

chilly atmosphere, between ten and eleven thousand feet, or thereabouts, above the sea.

At last the pale grey of morning became visible, and soon after uprose the glorious welcome sun, and showed us that we were on the heights of the pass, and about to descend through the woods of shadowing pine. Now then, for all the climates of the world, "succeeding each other in layers," to use Baron Humboldt's well-known expression in describing Mexico. For the visitor to this Land of Marvels, the traveller in these magical regions, in the course of a couple of days (and it is possible to do the same thing in a far less space of time — perhaps in some parts in a couple of hours), may cast his eye over the whole scale of the earth's varied vegetation, from the Tropics' gorgeous and dazzling parasitical plants, to the sombre firs and pines of the Arctic Circle.

Our descent was not at all a precipitous one at first; but after a time we journeyed along quite on the extreme brink and edge of the mountains, so that by leaning far out of the carriage, one could catch the sublimest views conceivable of all that intervened between their towering summits and the sea. The high mountain chain to the north of the pass turns eastward, and

is continued on to the Gulf of Mexico, in parallel lines of ridges, on the heights of which the traveller's eye looks down ; and that eye might also see confusedly, beautiful wild and solitary dells among the hills, and the sombre black region of lava and dwarfed and ragged pines, that he is leaving, and wilderness after wilderness of beauty that he is approaching nearer and nearer to ; and from the crest of some of the hills, looking to the south, the awful majesty of the Mountain of the Star (Orizaba), its dazzling brow crowned with unchangeable resplendence, till it seemed to have a brighter daylight of its own. Let him look behind him, and see the white frost like a faint sprinkling from the snows of the Coffre, blanching the funereal foliage of the solemn branches of pine and the beds of gloomy lava ; and let him look before him, and mark the groves of oranges, the corn-fields, the gardens of roses, and the palm—daughter of the sun—and thrice ten thousand flowering and blooming trees !—*There* laughs a leaping brook, lustrous, fresh, and clear, as if all the roses had shed all their diamond dews to form its fairy stream, and it rolled, tinted and blushing with their reflections. And here a forest of labyrinthine bowers makes a warm and glowing darkness of flower-shadows—zones after

zones, regions after regions, expanse after expanse, are stretching at his feet.

Not the world, but many worlds seem to be outspread in boundless magnificence before us, for it is so seldom you think of the single Earth, mingling in one transcendent unity,—one conjunction of almost antagonizing elements and properties, all the diversities, all the conflicting extremes it possesses, that when you behold them thus displayed in one overpowering consummate burst of triumph, and in the most stupendous and imposing array, you seem entering on a new state of existence, on a fresh stage of being, and can hardly believe that these wonders, crowded, heaped, precipitated, and concentrated,—(each separate beauty, each different display of grandeur, gaining so much by such juxtaposition, — such surprising contrast, that each seems far more beautiful, and far more majestic) — can indeed be the same to which the eye, or the tutored thought, or the imagination has been accustomed. These varieties, so accumulated and agglomerated, seem to be new varieties ; this creation, with all its choicest and selectest wonders and glories, so combined and united to each other, seems a vision of many creations, and the boundary—which, however seems no boundary

to all this gorgeous magnificence, but only a continuation, along which the dreaming, straining eye appears to travel into eternity,—is the all-glorious immeasurable ocean!

With such a spectacle spread out before him does the traveller dash downward—only too fast—to beautiful Xalapa. Spring and summer seem flying on wings of the rainbow and the rose to greet him; and every odoriferously-breathing zephyr is an *avant courier* of the floral delights that await him. Miles before you are whirled into the bowery, flowery country-like town of Xalapa, you rejoice in the far-floating odours of its crowding orange groves; and, what a scene enchants you! Fields of living emerald and chrysophrass; woods bathed in the beauty of myriads of blossoms (the starry orange bowers emulating the snows of glittering Orizaba), lovely slopes, the most graceful picturesque hollows, and, — built on the smiling brows of sunny hills, lordly-looking *haciendas*, with their white walls sparkling like spotless alabaster, — and tangled mazes of vernal delights and startling phenomena of vegetation; such as, stems that seem bearing all the flowers of one zone together, so crossed and mingled are the blossomy treasures;—(indeed in some places it seemed like solid masses of

blooms.) And what fairy glens and gorges, and glittering hamlets, and sequestered homes, and half-ruined convents glimmering through many-coloured thickets, and veiling streamers of a thousand-tendrilled blossoming vines; and tortuous paths, and silvery winding rills, and soft acclivities, seemingly intersecting and as it were overlapping each other, as if to conceal some more precious treasures of mystic beauty—if that were possible! And in some parts, afar off something that almost looks like a pageant of gorgeous sunset clouds fallen to earth, and melting in multitudinous splendour—it is but a variegated heap of the all but endless growths of Nature in these regions, billowing over some rising grounds, swelling with softest undulations, while the whole resounds with the joyous notes of singing birds.

But all this time I have forgotten to tell of the beautiful mirage we saw among the mountains: it was pointed out to us by M. de ——. It was hardly possible to believe it was not lakes of shining water we saw: the illusion was extraordinarily perfect, and some in the carriage obstinately refused to believe any thing but the evidence of their own fallible senses, till the scene gradually changed partly before their very eyes, sufficiently to convince

them of their error. We were told it was of very unusual occurrence in those parts.

There was a marvellous appearance also of some inverted houses, which were at a great distance in reality : and besides that, we beheld, before we left the mountain, a singular phenomenon,—an immense white stratum of clouds, spread out exactly like a vast ocean of snow, concealing, for a short time, the magnificent view beneath. This vanished as the sun gained power, having made its appearance during the morning twilight.

But now we must enter the charming "calles" of that pearl of cities, Xalapa. Again we admired its single-storied, terraced, and balconied houses, smothered in the loveliest of gardens, and many of them quite as large and handsome as the glazed-porcelain houses of Mexico.

We descended the steep streets to the Hotel de Diligencias, where this time we had much better rooms than the last : we had a very pretty, large, and airy apartment, decorated with a profusion of gaily-painted arabesques, in fresco, and opening on to a broad balcony on one side, and on another to a large wide gallery communicating with a beautiful covered sort of half conservatory, half corridor, enchantingly pretty, adorned with plants, and

from this branches the large balcony that runs round the sides of the inner walls of the house, overlooking the great court-yard, which balcony was rather a favourite promenading place when the huge diligencias were heard dashing in from various parts.

Before we went up stairs to take possession of our *quartos*, a very pretty little fair-haired boy came running into the court-yard, in great haste. It was the little son of M——: he was duly introduced to us, and appeared to be a charming little fellow; the day was beautiful, but cold; and as we were to stay at Xalapa till the morrow, owing to the arrangements of the diligencias, we went out walking, to see some of the old churches. Mr. C—— escorted us.

We climbed up the steep street, and arrived at a handsome-looking church, which was said to be beautiful within, and to have great treasures of *plata* (silver). After a little difficulty we effected an entrance. There was a great deal of dazzling silver certainly; but my attention was painfully arrested by some large wooden figures intended to represent our blessed Saviour, and which were truly shocking; they were most extravagantly painted. We afterwards walked a little way to see some of the

beautiful views of this charming place, past the gardens, with their wild profusion of clove-carnations, roses, jessamines, and orange trees.

As we strolled on we heard the sweet sounds of a harp suddenly struck very near us. We were just passing a large handsome house, and without intending to be uncivil, on the impulse of the moment we all looked into the large lofty ground floor room from whose enormous open but iron-barred windows were pouring the echoing strains: we saw a black-haired though fair señorita, apparently just taking her music lesson; for a grave musicmaster-like señor was standing by her, and, as it seemed to us, marking the time, and explaining the nature of the aria.

The señorita, having looked up, caught sight of us immediately, and blushing deeply remained in the attitude, and wrapped in the silence, of a painted St. Cecilia, suspended in mute surprise. It was evident that the good Xalapenos were never in the habit of giving way to such indiscreet habits of impertinent curiosity; so reluctantly we passed on, and soon after the melodious strains recommenced.

After returning to the hotel, I gave a commission to Mr. C——, to find me a *sarapé*, such as are worn here. A *mozo* brought in a goodly

number for me to choose from. Now it happened there was a deep-blue immense American blanket, which I wanted to get rid of, and as I had brought the least possible money with me (for not wishing to enrich the coffers of the robbers, I had the rest by bills on Vera Cruz), it was decided it was better to throw that blanket into the bargain (since after Peroté's chilly regions it was no longer needed), and the wonderful bewilderment of the poor *mozo*, at this proposition, was highly diverting. He said in piteous accents, his master had told him exactly what to do; and as the master had, naturally enough, not contemplated the circumstance that had by chance arisen, he had not tutored the *mozo* on this particular contingency; so that he seemed at his wit's end to know what to answer.

"Well," said I, in my choicest Spanish, "go and ask your master; then you will be sure to be right."

"But how can I go?" said he, "till I know what the lady has bought?"

"I shall buy this one, if your master will let me have it for" — (I forget the sum) — "and take this blue one, — and you can leave this and take the rest."

"Oh, no! no es posible."

Well, then, he might take them all (mine included) to his master, and bring back that one, and I could then pay it.

"No, no, that would not do: 'Dispense V. Señorita,' that is quite out of the question."

"But why?" and here he talked so fast, and as it seemed to me in such a curious *patois*, that I could not quite follow him; but yet it appeared to me he wished to leave the chosen one. We offered all sorts of arrangements, but nothing would do. At last Mr. C—— was called in to try to clear up the matter; he could not, and Señor Novarro was at last applied to,—whom, by the way, we found here, just where we had left him. He soon made all clear: he heard the man's story (who spoke in the most impetuously rapid way, so that none but a native could have well understood him), and he laughed much and said, that stupid man declared he did not know for his life what to do.

"For," said he, "I cannot arrange any price for the blue blanket, for my master gave me no directions about it. I cannot leave the *sarapés* here to go and ask him, because they are not paid for, and if one was paid for in full and I left it, I cannot take the rest *with* the blue blanket, to show, because the lady

will have no security for my return, and I cannot take —"

But here Señor Novarro interrupted him, and said that he was sure the lady wouldn't mind, and then explained the difficulty. The shopman and the *sarapés* were sent off, and he soon returned, saying what his master would allow, and the mighty bargain was speedily and satisfactorily closed for all parties.

Soon after, a diligence came thundering down the street, and we repaired to the great balcony to see the new arrivals.

A huge diligence, full of friars and nuns, made its appearance ; and Señor Novarro told me the enormous number of these gentry that had lately arrived, filling every public conveyance, had been the cause of his detention at Xalapa, for he could not get a single place. I asked him to what he attributed this immense influx of *padres* and nuns from Spain, and whether he thought it was owing to the alarm occasioned by the late spread of revolutionary doctrines. He had heard no cause assigned, but believed such was the case. It is certainly a curious fact, that, though we never travelled with any in the stage coaches ourselves, we had seen crowds of diligences constantly crammed with these reverend emigrants.

We left Xalapa very early the next morning, after a fruitless search for some keys which H—— lost a little while before we had to start. The sleepy *muchacha* gave us a candle with a snuff of alarming length, and I asked for *despabiladéras*, snuffers, which takes a certain time to pronounce, and by the time the said *despabiladéras* were found (which seemed to have gone on a party of pleasure for the day, with the keys), it was already the time to start, and after we had a very hurried chase, — quite a quick thing, but we could not catch our keys,—and put on our *sombreros* (which ladies' bonnets are called, as well as gentlemen's hats), it was rather late, and we had some reason to think the American coachman was somewhat indignant at the delay, though he amiably waited for us. Cerro Gordo's *varrancas* perhaps put him in good humour again.

When we arrived at Vera Cruz, we found the steamer had not arrived. She was very much after her time. Unluckily for us, we found the Casa de Diligencias quite full, and were obliged to put up at another hotel (kept by two Frenchmen), which was not nearly so good. I stupidly forgot to send M. Surutuza's letter, obligingly desiring that rooms

should be found for us, and every attention paid us; and, indeed, without that, Mr. Bell sent word, soon after we were established in this hotel, that he would contrive to give us apartments; but as the steamer was momentarily expected, and as the proprietors of this *méson* try to make us as comfortable as they can, I did not avail myself of his obliging proposition.

Among other people whom we recognized as having either formed part of our *compagnons de voyage*, on board the United States steamer "Walker," or as having been here before, was Mr. —— who had come over in the "Walker," for the purpose of bringing back from Mexico the body of his brother (who had died there from the effects of wounds received during the Mexican war), and conveying it to Indiana for interment.

There was an objection to the corpse being taken on board the "Walker," I believe: at any rate Mr. —— was still at Vera Cruz, not having yet accomplished his melancholy mission, but is about to sail, I think, in a packet ship. He is English by birth, but has been so long settled in the United States, that he has become quite an American, even in appearance.

This reminds me of a curious fact I have

heard stated, namely, that Dr. Gutzlaff, who has been so long a missionary to China, and is lately returned, has contracted quite a Chinese *cast* of *features*, as well as a celestial gait, countenance, and manners. The latter one can easily imagine, the former seems somewhat of a physiological curiosity.

The British Consul has just been to see me, and tells me they have a great deal of specie arrived to go by the steamer, and an immense mail. He says the steamer will probably arrive to-night, and he and his son must sit up all night to get the letters and papers in readiness for her. We almost live upon the balcony, for the heat inside the room is nearly insupportable. Good news! The English steamer "Thames" has just made her appearance!

## CHAPTER XI.

ARRIVAL AT HAVANA.—PASSENGERS ON BOARD THE "THAMES." AFFECTING STORY OF AN AMERICAN MERCHANT'S UNFORESEEN CALAMITY. — AN AMERICAN GRINLIN GIBBONS. — THE ENTERPRISING POLITICAL ORGAN-GRINDER. — FIRST GLIMPSE OF HAVANA.—THE HARBOUR.—THE MORRO CASTLE AND THE PUNTAL.—THE CABANAS.—THE CITY OF HAVANA.—VOLANTES. —THE PASÉO.—LADIES OF HAVANA.—THEIR DRESS.—THE GENTLEMEN. — USAGES OF GALLANTRY AT HAVANA. — THE MILITARY.—REVIEWS AND MUSIC.—ANXIETY OF SPAIN TO RETAIN CUBA.—CATHEDRAL OF HAVANA.—THE ASHES OF COLUMBUS. —HIS BUST. — HOW HIS ASHES HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE.—WORSHIPPERS IN THE CATHEDRAL. — THE BISHOP'S GARDEN. — RARE AND BEAUTIFUL TREES AND FLOWERS. — HURRICANES AT HAVANA. — VOLANTES IN UNIVERSAL USE. — WHERE BESTOWED SOMETIMES. — HAVANA HOUSES.—HOW FURNISHED.—SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN HAVANA.—FRUITS.

We arrived here (at the Havana), after a ten or eleven days' voyage—three days, however, of which we were detained at Tampico; for the sea ran so high, the little steamboat that was to bring out the specie could not get over the bar sooner. The bar was *cross*, they said!

We found the "Thames" a charming ship; so clean, and cool, and large — and we had

several very agreeable passengers. Among them were Lord M. Kerr and Mr. Bayard Taylor—the author of some beautiful poetical pieces, and of a work entitled "Views Afoot." He performed a pedestrian tour nearly all over Europe. He was then returning from California, and is, I believe, on the eve of publishing a work—already prepared for the press—relating to that country, which, I should think, would be exceedingly interesting. He is a very gentleman-like young man, and appears full of intelligence and information.

Mr. Hill, an English gentleman just returned from a lengthened tour, was also on board. He had been living between two and three years in Russia and Siberia (the last *not* involuntarily!), having latterly come from South America and Polynesia. He had sailed from Kamskatka, in a Russian merchant ship, and while in South America had made several excursions inland. His account of the poorer classes in Siberia (where the peasants are not serfs) made one think they must form almost the happiest and most flourishing peasantry in the world. It appears they have not only plenty to boil in the pot, but they have the pot boiling almost all day long: in short, plenty of fuel, and plenty of food and clothing.

Very unlike the poor *Californians* of olden days. It is probably known to many that on that very soil, now found to be teeming with the golden treasures of earth, the former inhabitants, in a state of the most abject poverty, were wont to subsist on grasshoppers!

We stopped at Mobile Point, on our way hither, to land and receive passengers and specie, and came-to among the crowded shipping at the anchorage there; but, in consequence of our long delay at Tampico, the "Thames" stayed as short a time as possible, and I had not an opportunity of seeing my dear friend Madame L. V——. Mr. Bayard Taylor, who landed there, was good enough to take her a note from me.

There was a very melancholy circumstance connected with our brief stay at Mobile. Mr. ——, an American merchant, who had been to Mexico on business, expected to receive at Mobile letters from his wife, to whom he had written from Mexico to say he should go by way of the Havana to New York, on such a day, by one of the American steamers (they are generally very punctual), and as they ordinarily arrive in the evening, he begged her to have tea ready for him.

He appeared a very pleasant amiable person,

and was extremely popular in the ship. I had not made his acquaintance; but one could not but remark his liveliness of manner and flow of amusing conversation. He was in the highest spirits that morning—poor man!—compassionating Mr. Taylor for not having to look forward "to tea prepared ready for him," and evidently full of joy and happiness.

The last time I saw him, he was leaning over the rail of the steamer, most merrily talking and laughing with those passengers who were transferred to a small high-pressure freight-boat, that was to take them to Mobile (as soon as the fog would graciously permit) —Mr. Taylor, Mr. C——, &c. We soon after continued on our course, and I went down to the cabin to read a little before dinner, which was very shortly afterwards ready. I was rather surprised not to see the captain in his usual place, and soon everybody was shocked to learn the cause of his absence.

He had to break to poor Mr. —— the news of his young and lovely wife's almost sudden death! The electric telegraph had brought rapidly-succeeding accounts respecting her from New York, the first announcing her sudden and dangerous illness, the second to say she was worse, and the third to announce her

death. This sad news was only brought on board a little before we started, and Captain A—— was charged with the painful office of breaking the heart-racking tidings. As the news of the death and illness were brought at the same time, there had been no previous preparation, and the captain vainly attempted at first to disguise the fatal character of the announcement he had to make. His trembling voice and tell-tale looks betrayed him, and the unfortunate bereaved husband divined at once the whole extent of his misfortune.

Captain A—— told me, afterwards, the scene was a most trying and terrible one. The wretched man stood as if petrified with horror, his eyes glaring and glazed, and fixed as in a trance. After he had stood rooted to the spot for some time in agonized silence, he repeated the word "dead" in the deep hollow voice of the most profound despair; and it was the only word he uttered, or sign of life he showed, during the remainder of that day. Nor did he move his eyes, that constantly were fixed, with a wild dreadful stare, on vacancy.

The captain said it was a most piteous sight to see, and he began to be really alarmed for his reason, when it became apparent that nothing could rouse him, and he still repeated,

as if mechanically, at intervals "dead! dead!" in the same tone of frozen horror. He was not left alone for a single moment, day or night, so alarming did his state appear.

This sad and utterly-unexpected misfortune cast quite a gloom over the ship. Poor man! he appeared to be a very devoted husband, and Mr. —— said he had seen a beautiful miniature of the deceased wife, which the unhappy man had always carried about with him, and that it was the portrait of a very lovely person indeed. But I will not dwell longer on such a melancholy theme.

There was on board a very ingenious American—I think, but am not quite sure, a New Englander—(it is the New Englanders that the Americans themselves call "Yankees"), who made, during the voyage, out of a common bit of wood, merely with his penknife, the most lovely and delicate little wooden chains imaginable, and other curiosities requiring the greatest skill and nicety of handling.

There was among the deck passengers an enterprising organ-grinder, who had resolved on being the pioneer of his profession in Mexico, and who expected to "Oh! Susiannaize" and "Yankee-doodleize" the whole country. His speculation failed; and I was told he com-

plained bitterly of the lamentable want of love for street music in the Mexicans, to which lack, on their part, he seemed to attribute the generally revolutionary state of the country, and their backwardness in the art of self-government. A deliciously hideous monkey accompanied him; but whether his diverting tricks—for he had, of course, received a distinguished education—were equally unappreciated, I know not; or whether, if so, the musical speculator thought this indifference also helped to explain many defects in the working of the Mexican constitution, I cannot pretend to say.

We had a rapid run from Mobile to this place, and arrived here about two hours after noon, in the most brilliant and beautiful weather imaginable. Everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation when we passed the handsome lighthouse (La Farola) with General O'Donnel's name (under whose administration it was built), in immense characters on it.

The first glimpse of the Havana, from the entrance to the harbour, is remarkably picturesque, beautiful, and striking. The colossal palm-trees (the magnificent "Palma real") that tower majestically in the back-ground on the hills (seeming to gaze down like a guard of giants over the splendid city) form a glorious

verdant sort of outer and partial frame-work for it, while the eye rests with delight on the nearer objects, especially on the crowded and beauteous harbour, so covered with shipping from every part of the civilized world, with the flags of every nation streaming on the soft breeze, and reflected on its calm and silvery waters.

The Morro Castle is exceedingly striking and imposing. This strong and formidable fortress is built on the solid rock, and almost appears to form a part of it, so steadfast and enduring seem its massive towers and walls and battlements, looking stern and gloomy as an old northern feudal fortress, notwithstanding a few light plumy cocoa-nut palms cast their delicate shadows on the grass-covered banks near the stately castle.

The harbour is one of the very finest in the world, sufficiently deep for the largest vessels, and capacious enough to accommodate a fleet of a thousand ships, or more. There is a narrow entrance to this splendid harbour (from whose magnificence the city received the name of "La Havana"—as the harbour, *par excellence*, I believe—and yet I think the *present* Spanish word for harbour and haven is "puerto"). This entrance, indeed, is so narrow that only a single ship can enter at once, and it is

fortified the whole length with strong works, platforms, and artillery. Opposite to the Morro Castle there is another fort, called the Puntal. This is connected with the city to the north. The Morro is built in a triangular form : it is fortified strongly with bastions, and mounted with many pieces of cannon, which are almost *à fleur d'eau.* The city itself stands on the western side of its noble harbour, and is extensively surrounded by ramparts, bastions, and trenches. In addition to the fortifications already enumerated, it is surmounted with works, which are all of them supplied with a vast profusion of artillery. I hear that they have been lately strengthening and improving the various formidable fortifications, in anticipation of a threatened visit from the Americans. The large fortress, called the Cabañas, stands near the Morro Castle, and covers a great deal of ground; numbers of soldiers were seen clambering up, or half-sliding down its steep sides.

We found the British steamer, bound for Jamaica, waiting for the "Thames." It was nearly evening before we landed, and found ourselves in a very comfortable American hotel, kept by Mr. Fulton, of New Orleans. We found Mr. Kennedy, who is now acting as consul in the absence of Mr. Crawford, oblig-

ingly waiting to see us. He told us Lord Durham was here, and very ill, having caught a fever at Jamaica; but Havana itself appears to be quite healthy just now. The heat, however, is very great and oppressive, though we are in one of the coolest and freshest houses within the city. We are very near the entrance to the harbour, and constantly a delightful refreshing breeze blows on our broad balcony, and through the enormous window-gates that open upon it. It is a pretty and interesting sight to watch the ships almost constantly entering or leaving the harbour.

I shall stay here a little while, I think, and see something of the Havana, in case anything should prevent my return here after we have left our cards with the Pacific. It is an extraordinarily gay-looking town. Of course in the heat of the day no one thinks of stirring out who can help it. But when it begins to be cool, the city seems almost to shake with an earthquake of carriages, going in different directions, whose fair occupants are visit-paying, shopping, and so forth, usually ending with the *paséo;* and beautiful and fairy-like these carriages mostly are. They are called *volantes*, and are generally drawn by mules, driven by a postilion in some splendid livery.

We went out the other day, and I went a little way into the country—a very pretty drive, indeed. It was along a broad smooth road (what a luxury to us, after the road to Mexico!), bordered with a lovely hedge of roses and flowering pomegranates in their greatest beauty. We then went to the *paséo*, where carriages—multitudinous as mosquitoes in Havana—swarmed in double lines, and all seemed like a fairy tale in action. Those graceful, aërial-looking, gaily-painted open *volantes*, like cars fit for Queen Mab, and the ethereal-seeming beings within, crowned with flowers, with no other covering on their gracious heads than these delicate blossoms, and their own massive braids of superb black hair,—for very seldom did they even wear the mantilla, and when they did, its exquisitely-disposed folds seemed little else than the light shadow cast by those abundant waves of silky sable locks—all was enchantment.

How gracefully waved their fans, with which they fluttered light pretty salutations to each other!—those glistening feathery fans, like the wings of sylphides: and their dresses!—surely Arachne herself must have spun them, and Iris coloured them! I will try and paint, in words, three of these fair daughters of Cuba,

as they recline in their luxurious *volantes*. One is in a dress of the most sky-like azure; another in a diaphanous dreamy sort of robe, of the most gossamer texture, and of the softest yet brightest tint of rose-colour; and the third (who sits forward in the middle) is in spotless lily white: and these dresses float light and full as very clouds about them. They are all *décoltée*, and with very short sleeves, and all are snow-pale with statuesque features and magnificent hair.

There seem to be hundreds and thousands of these carriages, with equally fair and fairy-like *damosels* within, and clad in every hue of the rainbow—lilac, emerald-green, the faintest strawy-yellow (that admirably suits with their generally jet-black locks), and various delicate tints and shades of all colours. The carriages themselves look like enormous butterflies glittering in the rays of the descending sun, with their innumerable, bright, varied colours.

Then, how beautiful are the long double rows of trees on either side of the *paséo*, and the flowers, and the exquisite sky above, and the splendid fountains, falling into sculptured marble basins; and how charming is the delicious temperature, and the soft breeze from the neighbouring sea!

You do not see here, as in Mexico, hundreds of superbly-mounted *caballeros*, making their steeds champ, and prance, and *caracolear*, till their weighty silver ornaments flash like lightning on the eye. Here the gentlemen are generally pedestrian promenaders, if they are not lounging, stretched out in their luxurious *volantes* themselves. They walk leisurely and gently along, smoking the fragrant weed, and gazing at the fair Habaneras who are passing in their fairy coracles on wheels; and they tell me it is the fashion here, when a gallant señor sees some particularly lovely young doña, for him to exclaim—"How beautiful—how lovely!" and for her to reply, with a slight gracious inclination of her little stag-like head—"Gracias, caballero." I was not a little surprised, at first, at the answer the ladies make to the universally-employed salutation—"A los pies de V. señorita!" "Besos los manos de V. caballero!" (I am at your feet, madam!—I kiss your hands, sir!). But the dignified gentleness with which they say it, seemed to take off from the too great condescension apparently expressed. It was as superbly gracious as the bending of a crowned head in acknowledgment of a subject's homage.

There seems a great deal of alarm just now

about the expected American invasion. It is rumoured—but very likely falsely—that some of the troops are disaffected ; and I am told that most of the troops sent here are from the dregs of the population in Spain, convicts and marauders of all kinds. The cavalry, however, are said to be a very fine body of men : as far as outward appearance goes, they *all* would seem to be so. The foot soldiers strike me as being much taller than our infantry regiments, and are exceedingly clean-looking and well-dressed.

There are reviews going on almost every day now, and military music abounds in Havana : it is rare not to hear the roll of drums and the flourish of trumpets. A military band plays every evening on the Grand Plaza. The best I have heard here is, I think, the Artillery band ; but they all are good.

They have a large number of troops already in Cuba, and I believe they expect more very shortly. Rumours of every kind are rife, but one can place no faith in any of them. I believe only that Spain is most sincerely desirous of retaining this magnificent possession of hers—and well she may be. Not only its almost unequalled fertility and natural advantages, but its position, renders it a place of the

very highest commercial and political importance. Its situation, commanding the entrance to the Mexican Gulf, and also the communication between North and South America, has caused it to be named "The Queen of the Antilles," "The Sentinel of the Mississippi," "The Key of the Gulf;" and its great beauty and luxuriance have acquired for it the denomination of "The Gem of the American Seas," "The Beautiful Antille," "The Pearl of the Islands," and other admiring designations.

When we first arrived here, how natural seemed the loving exclamations and remarks of returning "Habaneros," who, bending over the guards of the steamer, uttered ejaculatory expressions of delight as we neared the enchanting shores:—"O! que escenas tan hermosas. El cielo sin nubes, y la mar tan serena, y el sol tan brilliante." "Si! y las florestas tan deliciosas! Y esa verdura eterna de la hermosissima isla." "Mira V. que multitud de barcos, bergantines y goletas y fregatas y paquetes y—hombre, que multitud!" "Si! y mil banderas y banderolas de variados colores y de todas las naciones! Y que vista tan hermosa ofrece la ciudad desde el puerto. Mire V.! á fé mia, no se ha visto cosa mas bella!" and so on.

We have been to see the cathedral here, which is extremely interesting, from being the burial-place of Columbus. It is not as magnificent as the cathedral in Mexico, but it is a noble building. On the right side of the grand altar is an urn, containing those precious ashes: it is enclosed in the wall. A fine basso-relievo is placed before it, of the bust of that mighty Discoverer. This bust is the size of life, and under it is read the following inscription:—"O restos é imagen del grande Colon, mil siglos durad guardados en la urna. Y en la remembrancia de nuestra nacion." There is a small, but very interesting and beautiful painting opposite to the tomb, which is said to represent the Pope and the Cardinals of that day, celebrating High Mass previous to the departure of Columbus from the shores of Spain, on his first adventurous and momentous expedition in his humble "caraval."

Columbus has not had as much rest even in the grave as falls to the lot of most mortals; for his relics have been moved from tomb to tomb. He died in Valladolid, in Spain, in the year 1506, and a tomb was there erected to his memory, and inscribed thus:—"A Castillo y a Leon Nuevo Mundo dio Colon" (in Spanish he is called "Cristoval Colon"). The place in

which the body was deposited was the convent of San Francisco, in Valladolid, and the funeral ceremonies were celebrated with great pomp in the parochial church of Santa Maria de la Antigua; but in 1513, his remains were removed to the convent of Las Cuevas, of the Carthusians, at Seville, and they were deposited in the chapel of Santa Christo. It was in the year 1536 they were transported to Hispaniola, and they were there inhumed near the grand altar of the cathedral of the capital city of San Domingo; but they were not destined to repose there in uninterrupted peace. After Hispaniola was ceded to France in 1795, the Spanish government came to the resolution of carrying off these venerable relics to the Island of Cuba; nor can one feel surprise at such a determination when reflecting on all that Spain owed and still owes to that wonderful man. They may well feel proud of these precious relics, connected — as Washington Irving says, in his highly interesting "Life of Columbus"—"with the most glorious epoch of Spanish history."

Let me transcribe a little of his impressive account: — "Accordingly, on the 20th of December 1795, in the presence of an august assemblage of the dignitaries of the

Church, and the civil and military officers, the vault was opened beside the high altar of the cathedral: within were found the fragments of a leaden coffin, a number of bones, and a quantity of mould, evidently the remains of a human body. These were carefully collected and put into a case of gilded lead, secured by an iron lock. The case was enclosed in a coffin covered with black velvet, and the whole placed in a temporary mausoleum. On the following day there was another grand convocation at the cathedral. The vigils and masses for the dead were chanted, and a funeral sermon was preached by the archbishop. After these solemn ceremonials in the cathedral, the coffin was transported to the ship, attended by a grand civil, religious, and military procession. The banners were covered with crape. There were chants, and responses, and discharges of artillery, and the most distinguished persons of the several orders took turns to support the coffin.

"The reception of the body at Havana was equally august. There was a splendid procession of boats to conduct it from the ship to the shore. On passing the vessels of war in the harbour, they all paid the honours due to an admiral and captain-general of the navy.

On arriving at the mole, the remains were met by the governor of the island, accompanied by the generals of the military staff. They were then conveyed, in the utmost pomp, to the cathedral. Masses, and the solemn ceremonies of the dead were performed by the bishop, and the mortal remains of Columbus were deposited in the wall on the right side of the grand altar, where they still remain."

It is hardly possible, I think, to avoid feeling profoundly interested and affected on looking at the spot, that little spot, where the ashes of the mighty man repose who gave the vast world of the wild far West to the East; and to the West—Heaven: for he bade the great Star of the East, the star of holy religion and blessed Christianity, to shed its glorious rays on that benighted and unconscious West.

There were but a very few people in the cathedral to disturb or distract the deep feeling of reverence with which we regarded that hallowed tomb. One or two kneeling figures of women, silently and fervently praying, only added to the solemnity of the scene. It is a touching and sweet custom in Cuba for all, without the least distinction of colour or class, to kneel together on the floor of the churches. You will see a fair señora, splendidly dressed,

kneeling on her piece of carpet (carried to the church by her little negro page), and by her side, perhaps, a negro bends his head, grizzled with age, in prayer; or a negress, attired in the most gaudy colours of scarlet, blue, and yellow, uplifts her jet-black hands in silent supplication.

We have been to see the bishop's palace-gardens, now belonging to the Condé de Peñalver. The Condé is restoring them to all their pristine beauty, for they had lately been much neglected. There are great numbers of fine mangoes here, and pleasant is it walking in the shadowy alleys which they form. There are also some beauteous bread-fruit trees, whose large and deeply-indented leaves I most particularly admire.

A splendid India-rubber tree attracted our attention much. Mr. C—— (Lord L——'s brother), who went with us, broke off a branch, and the liquid India-rubber oozed out plentifully, and covered his hands, sticking his fingers together in an uncomfortable fashion, as if he had been washing his hands in a jar of treacle.

An unfortunate crocodile pines in solitude in these gardens, that is to say, without any of his own kith and kin to soothe his weary hours. Various animals—some rare ones—are confined in that part of the grounds;

there are some ornamental pieces of water there, covered with splendid lilies of a beautiful rose colour; and the glorious ceiba, and the fair royal palm of Cuba, stand like rival monarchs of the vegetable world. The flowers, of course, were almost without number in this beauteous place.

Besides this delightful possession, the Condé has a splendid house in the city, in which, I hear, there is a *boudoir* representing the apartment of a mandarin and mandariness in far Pekin, which is declared to be in the *Chinesest* taste imaginable, and more Pekinish than the Chinese junk itself.

We have seen several traces of the last violent hurricane here. The most complete ruin is that of an unfinished opera-house of the most magnificent dimensions: it remains there still in its fragmentary state, encumbering the ground, waiting for an enterprising speculator to repair the damage and finish it, or perhaps for another hurricane to act the part of squatter, and make a complete *clearing*. It is a superstition among the more ignorant classes in Havana, that in consequence of turning a church dedicated to San Francisco (who, it seems, is the patron saint of hurricanes) into a tobacco warehouse or some-

thing of that kind, the island will be visited by a succession of hurricanes, the last of which will destroy Havana entirely, and sweep it from the face of the earth. It is said several have already taken place on San Francisco's day.

The streets are exceedingly narrow here, and the *volantes*, with their immensely long shafts and enormous wheels, turn in them with the greatest difficulty, but luckily they do not easily overturn. In the suburbs the streets are wider. A single *volanta* stopping will sometimes block up a whole *calle*. The *calesero* is urged, perhaps, by some other driver behind to let him pass by, but it is not always this is conceded by the fair Creoles in the carriage; at least so says La Condesa de Merlin, in her amusing "Viaje á la Habana." Often, she tells us, is a feminine voice heard from the depths of *quitrin* or *volavte*, crying, "No te muevas, Juan, no te muevas por nadie!"

They keep, in rich families, one *volante*, at least, constantly waiting, all ready, at the door, in case any of the members of the family should take a sudden fancy for a little drive; and, in many wealthy establishments, each daughter — nay, each child — has her own *volante!* Among the poorer classes (and poor they must be, indeed, if they do not indulge themselves

with one carriage at least) it is constantly the custom, from want of the necessary space and building, to turn a corner of the drawing-room into a coach-house. In fact, I was told they consider a handsome *volante* (and rather than not have a handsome one they would half-starve themselves on a little chocolate and a *cigarito*) a really great ornament to their not otherwise much-furnished rooms. It looks very conspicuous and very stately with its gigantic wheels, and it is occasionally used, I am informed, as a sort of elevated and sociable arm-chair by two, or perhaps three, of the ladies of the house when the rooms are particularly full; and thus, raised as it were on a silver embossed throne above their guests, they chat with them condescendingly, and survey them complacently from an advantageous position.

I have never witnessed this little domestic enthronization myself, but we have frequently seen the *volante* standing like any other piece of furniture in the drawing-room, as we walked or drove by. It is impossible not to see into their sitting-rooms: they are on the ground-floors. Havana houses are generally extremely low—I suppose on account of the hurricanes—and in the less-magnificent mansions such a sight, as I said before, is quite common.

These apartments, in general, have a great resemblance to each other: large, cool, and with little furniture except a number of rocking-chairs, which are called here *butacas*. On these, softly balancing themselves backwards and forwards, will be seen usually the ladies of the family, their perpetual-motion fans in their white hands—those never-to-be-forgotten-or-dispensed-with fans, which they agitate *cadenciosamente*, and with the utmost grace.

It may perchance be a *tertulia* that you look upon: the great doors are thrown open *de par en par*. Numerous lights are blazing in beautiful candelabras of glass or alabaster; flowers are profusely scattered about in lovely vases of porcelain and of silver, and enormous *faroles* —a species of splendid lantern, which sheds the most dazzling light,—are illuminating the recesses of the spacious apartments, and the broad corridors, and large balconies, where groups of men may be seen talking together, or admiring the beautiful array of ladies seated in the grand *sala*.

They seem to have a pleasant custom here of rising from the dinner-table after the *segundo servicio*. And during the time occupied in making a complete change of decor-

ations, they take a *paséo*—a little promenade —for a quarter of an hour or some minutes, in the enormous galleries (furnished with green *jalousies* to exclude every ray of the sun, and in which, during the hottest season, they usually dine) or in the beautiful gardens under the shadowy coolness of the interlacing bowers and avenues.

On their return to the banqueting-room, they find an immense profusion of crystal, alabaster, or porcelain vases, and *canastillas* (small baskets) of silver, loaded with a vast variety of fruits. "Mameys" which, says Madame de Merlin, are "Alimento de las almas bienaventuradas en los valles del otro mundo, segun la creencia de los habitantes de Haiti," and the "zapatillas suaves," which she declares have a "gusto silvestre." Then there are *tunas*—a very handsome fruit of a lovely rose-colour, about the size of a small pine-apple, the inside of which is excellent, and all of it eatable: it looks like the most delicate royal ermine, with the tiniest little black tags—whipped ermine! —almost beaten to a soft creamy froth. This fruit is reckoned remarkably wholesome, and is so good that the "almas bienaventuradas" would do well to add it to their *mameys*. Then there are *guayavas*, and hosts of others.

Besides fruits of almost innumerable kinds and sizes, and shapes, there are crowds of light silver dishes, and *bandejas* of *dulces*—which mean all kinds of sweets (*dulces variados hasta lo infinito*); and the table, the borders of the dishes, even the glasses, are wreathed and covered, and almost buried in flowers. This change is like the work of magic: the most delicious perfumes chase away even the faintest smell of meat, and the eye reposes itself on a rainbow-coloured wilderness of blossoms mixed with the most tempting and the choicest fruits. Enormous doors, or rather *puerta-ventanas* (doors and windows in one), are opened on the balconies, and gigantic windows besides, perhaps lightly draperied with muslin (and during the day-time shaded with *persianas*—Venetian blinds) to exclude the tropical sun's scorching beams, are thrown wide open, and through them the soft zephyr passes, and the refreshing, cooling sound and sight of the glittering fountains.

The best time for flowers in Cuba is the winter—if winter it can be called. They then abound in all their richest beauty. In the summer the intense heat of the sun withers them up.

## CHAPTER XII.

PERFORMANCE OF A MILITARY BAND IN THE GRAND SQUARE. — THE DIVERSIFIED COMPANY. — DESCRIPTION OF HAVANA NIGHTS.—THE OPERA-HOUSE.—THE SINGERS.—EXHORTATION TO SPANISH LADIES TO PRESERVE THEIR NATIONAL DRESS.—AN EXECUTION.—MATERIAL PROSPERITY OF HAVANA.—"JESUS DEL MONTE."—DINNER WITH THE CAPTAIN GENERAL.—THE COMPANY.—ESCORT OF THE CONDE.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE ISTHMUS JOURNEY.—A TERTULIA.—MISS M——'S EXQUISITE PLAYING AND SINGING.—THE ENVIRONS OF HAVANA. — THE PASÉO OF YSABEL SEGUNDA.—ENVIRONS OF HAVANA IN THE EVENING. —"GUAGIROS." — DESCRIPTION OF THEIR HOUSES. — CUSTOMS AND DRESS OF THE "GUAGIROS." — CHINESE LABOURERS IN HAVANA.—ANECDOTE OF CHINESE THIEVES.—PREPARING TO DEPART FOR PANAMA.

We went to hear the military band play last evening in the Grand Square: it was a splendid band, and played several opera airs beautifully. Many ladies were walking up and down, generally attended by *caballeros;* but the greater part of the *distinguées Habaneras* were in their *volantes,* each fair señorita looking like the *Reine des fées,* crowned with flowers. The *muchedumbre* (mob or crowd) were standing about, evidently enjoy-

ing the music; the negroes, and their sable dames and damsels, especially appear to delight in it. The whole scene is one of great beauty and enchantment: the lovely trees in the Grand Plaza, the magnificent crystal sun of the night,—that crown of glory—(which is so unlike that tame somewhat half-a-crown-like silver lamp, we call the moon, in our little northern nook), the flower-crowned ladies in those fairy chariots, sparkling with silver—the splendid liveries of the postilions—the gay military uniforms — the picturesque-looking negroes and negresses standing about (or sometimes dancing in their glee to the exhilarating tunes that are played)—the negresses occasionally in white dresses, scarlet satin shoes, yellow turbans, and blue scarfs, and various other such fantastical combinations of colours, with their great flaming eyes, *á la flor de la cara*— all unite to form a delightful and singular picture.

How true is this description of an Havana night by a charming writer: "La noche es aqui tan deliciosa! — qué transparencia! qué grandeza en este cielo resplandeciente de estrellas y de meteoros! — cómo penetra en los poros abiertos por el calor el soplo tibio de la brisa de tierra embalsamada con todos

los perfumes de la vegetacion. El aire fresco de la tarde reemplaza al calor sofocante del dia bajo un cielo tan claro como si el disco de la luna lo ocupase todo."

We have been to the opera, which is very good here indeed. The Tacon theatre (the Opera-house) is beautiful. Mrs. T——, with whom I have had the pleasure to make acquaintance here, was so good as to invite us to go with her. Her box was an excellent one, and we saw and heard to perfection. The interior of this theatre, which is very large, is exquisitely light and graceful, and beautifully decorated: the boxes are only separated by a slight railing, and there is another gilded railing in front of them. The whole has the most cool, aërial, and brilliant appearance imaginable, and reminded me a little of a vast and most magnificent saloon I had seen in one of the palaces of the Sultan at Constantinople.

The opera was the "Huguenots;" it was admirably got up and put on the stage. Steffanoni and Bossio were the chief female singers, and the men were Salvi and Marini, &c. Salvi sang quite splendidly. After the opera, Signora Bossio came on the stage, dressed like a "Madrileña" (it was her benefit), and sang

some Spanish airs exquisitely, in the true piquant Spanish style: the songs were interrupted by spoken remarks, and almost convulsed the audience with laughter. Among other things, she appeared (in a pretty *patois*) to be recommending the Spanish mantilla and dress to universal use, and to be abusing the French fashions most unmercifully, in the drollest and quaintest manner, her arms akimbo, and yet looking as graceful as possible.

And how right the "Madrileña" was! What can be so beautiful as that loveliest of costumes? The Spanish ladies should take care what they are doing. If there are to be "no Pyrenees" in the matters of dress, will not "the ladies of Spain" lose their greatest, most characteristic, and peculiar of charms? Such a macadamization of costumes to one insipid sameness, as seems ever to be gaining ground, in defiance of the difference of climate, customs, and other regulating circumstances, will make the world a trifle more trite and stupid than it is at present; but I hope the masses will generally have the good sense to retain their beautiful old dresses. What an unintentional dissertation! "Annotations and reflections" on Signora Bossio's lively song! By the way, both at Mexico and here, the mere appear-

ance of the beauteous Spanish costume was alone enough to draw forth ardent applause!

The Havaneros seem to form an enthusiastic audience, and to be possessed of great good taste and discrimination. The fair Havaneras look particularly well at the opera: we saw some extremely handsome ones, with the whitest of skins, and the blackest of hair. In these light gilded boxes they look like hundreds of Peris in magnificent cages, fluttering their fans, as though about to escape. This incessant movement of nearly innumerable fans makes the vast airy house seem as if it was hovering on ten thousand waving wings, and on the point of soaring away to mix among those *gigantescas nubes* (huge clouds) so well described by the authoress I have already quoted, when she says, "Como se balancean en el aire las nubes gigantescas adornadas de ópalos y de rubies," when from time to time large gauzy splendid luminous vapours float on this resplendent atmosphere.

We drove to the opera, and returned in an open *volanta* (one of Mrs. T——'s). The air was so deliciously warm (yet fresh and not suffocating) that on coming out of the house it seemed to be hotter than it was within. Soldiers are stationed round the theatre to keep order,

and the crowds of *volantes* rush off with the utmost regularity.

There was an execution here the other day. The criminal was a Spaniard; the crime, murder; and he has confessed, since his detection and imprisonment, a large number of assassinations that he had committed previously. He made a public declaration before he was *garottëd*, stating that all his wickedness was caused by the early desertion of his parents, and his total want of education. Mr. C—— went to see the execution. We passed the place by chance where it was to take place, the evening before, and there was already a large throng of persons collected to see the dreadful spectacle; so they seem as fond of such horrors in this land of flowers and sunshine, as the citizens of smoky dusky London.

Havana is brilliantly lighted with gas: when there is a moon, however, the gas is not lighted, as it would be indeed quite a work of supererogation. There are American omnibuses that run regularly to the Cerro, and the other suburbs. The Americans (they tell me) take the lead always in commencing these improvements, and after being for a while in leading-strings under their tuition, the citizens of

Havana take the management of these affairs into their own hands.

No city can well give one an idea of greater material prosperity than the Havana. The numbers of beautiful shops, teeming with every article of luxury, grace, and convenience; the magnificent palaces and *quintas* (country houses) in the neighbourhood; the splendour and opulence visible on all sides; the brilliancy and costliness of the countless thousands of equipages, hurrying hither and thither on errands of pleasure and business—all make this appear, as I believe it is, one of the most flourishing and wealthy cities in the world.

As to the carriages, they seem literally running over one another. I have before said that I had heard every daughter in a rich family has her own especial *volanta*, and I see this is more than corroborated by the Condesa de Merlin. She says "acqui cada individuo de la familia hasta los niños, tiene su volanta."

We went up to Jesus del Monte, the other day, to see Miss Inglis, sister of Madame C. de la B——. She appears to be a charming person, and is much liked and admired here: her blonde *chevelure* and blue eyes, make her a great contrast to the dark-eyed Habaneras in general. She is staying with a cousin at

Jesus del Monte (it is a sort of suburb of Havana, and is situated on a height, with beautiful views and cool country air). They have a delightful house there, and it is an easy distance from the capital. The road to and from this place is lovely, bordered on each side with roses and pomegranates.

We dined with the Captain-General and the Condesa de Alcoy, the other night. With the exception of Mr. K——, the judge, and Mr. C——, the guests were all Spanish and Habanese. The Conde speaks French fluently, but the Condesa and her daughter know no language but Spanish; so I was obliged to talk Spanish as well as I could, which is very indifferently indeed. The banquet was very splendid.

The palace is magnificent. There is a large full-length portrait of Queen Ysabel Segunda, in one of the enormous lofty rooms, which represents her as very interesting-looking and pretty: the Condesa says she is exceedingly improved in looks lately. During the dinner an immense number of slaves waited behind the guests' chairs (here they did not rise between the courses, as we are told they do in Creole families); and when the dessert was over, all rose at once, and repaired to the large bal-

conied drawing-rooms for chocolate and coffee. Behind her chair, at dinner, the Condesa had a little Chinese page-in-waiting, attired in the complete dress of the scorners of outer barbarians. This costume was made of the richest materials, and looked extremely handsome.

After dinner, a kind of reception, or *tertulia*, took place. The ladies were all ranged in a formal semicircle. I sate next to the Condesa; and a French lady, who could not speak a syllable of Spanish, sate on the other side of her. However, the Conde and some of the gentlemen who spoke French, conversed with her, and the evening passed away very pleasantly altogether.

We returned home, as usual, in an open *volanta*, after staying a little while in the Grand Plaza, to hear the band. When the Conde drives out, it is always with a gallant escort of lancers. He has an open carriage that looks like one of Parisian manufacture, and the Condesa and Mademoiselle de Roncali always appear in bonnets that seem fresh from Paris, thus discarding the beautiful Spanish *mantilla* entirely.

General C——, the American Consul here—a very gentlemanlike and distinguished person, whose acquaintance I have lately made—has kindly offered to arrange about my passage

for me, and I am busily preparing for our Isthmus journey. We have to take provisions, get riding-dresses, &c., and as the steamer stays a very short time when she does arrive, it is necessary that we should be *quite* ready.

To-day it is very hot, and the least exertion fatigues one; notwithstanding, there is a charming breeze from the sea, and this hotel is in a very cool situation. I cannot describe how enchantingly cool the palace is: with its enormous galleries and corridors of white marble, and immense halls and *salas*, I should think they could never find it too hot there. In the hottest day it must be like those *ice-caves* where Winter reigns, while Summer is revelling in all her splendour within a few feet of him. I was so sorry when I heard, after we had *left* New Haven, that one of these extraordinary caves is to be seen very near that city. There is another, I believe, in Georgia.

We have been to a little *tertulia* at Mrs. M——'s. The flowers there were inexpressibly delicious and lovely, and so was the music. I never heard such magnificent playing on the piano-forte but once, as Miss M——'s. Her execution is perfectly prodigious; but in addition to that she seems to have a soul at every one of her fingers' ends—and a seraph's soul to

boot. The strength and power with which she touches the instrument is wonderful. The whole performance indeed is quite magical, and when one looks at the delicate *svelte* sylph-like figure of the young lady, you can hardly believe it was she who called forth the volume of sound that you heard.

Miss M—— sang a French song afterwards, beautifully; but, in consequence of a delicacy of chest, from over-exertion of the voice in practising, she is not allowed to sing often, and only songs that do not try the voice much. The exquisite feeling, grace, and marvellous delicacy of execution with which she sang that little *romanza*, made one regret deeply that imperious necessity forced her to abstain from further exercise of her charming vocal powers. Miss M—— speaks but little English, and that with a pretty French accent, though her father is English. Her mother is French. I believe, from living at Havana, she speaks Spanish like a native.

In the large Creole houses here, that I have seen, I observe in the chief *sala* a sort of canopy over a sofa at the head of the room, where the mistress of the house sits with perhaps one or two distinguished guests. The rest are seated on chairs, either in a semi-

circle, or in a double line, like a living human avenue.

We had a delightful drive the other day in the environs of Havana. We first went to see Mrs. C——, the lady of the American Consul. Their house is large, and very pleasant; the marble floors, with here and there a pretty mat, look charmingly cool. We then went to see different views of the city, which are all beautiful. We drove through the lovely Paséo de Tacon, and admired its immense length, and splendid fountains, and statues.

The Paséo of Ysabel Segunda, is also a very charming one; and ladies and children are sometimes seen promenading under its umbrageous and flower-besprinkled alleys, which is rare in Havana, for hardly ever does a señora's foot—the lovely Spanish "foot of fire"—touch the earth in this be-carriaged and luxurious place. The different roads around the capital, in the evening, are generally alive with people hurrying on business, or driving leisurely and loungingly along, enjoying the *dolce far niente*, which is indeed to be indulged in to perfection at the Havana. Now you meet a *quitrin* or *volanta*, or two and three together, filled with ladies, and now

a *hacendado* (planter) returning from his estate, perhaps, near the capital, *cigarito* in mouth, and looking as if life was as full of sweets for him as his land is of sugar; and now it is a knot of *guagiros*, or *monteros*, coming on some errand to the city or the suburbs. These are a peculiar race in Cuba, and, it is said, retain many of the distinguishing characteristics of the ancient Indian race, to whom Cuba once belonged. His humble but picturesque house is probably exactly what, in former times, was that of the aborigines. Light trees of the same height are driven fast into the ground, and form a perfect square. But the following description is excellent:—"Y formando un quadrado perfecto sustentan por su extrémidad una especie de red de bambues que colocados transversalmente crecen y son atados á los arboles con lianas ó enredaderas, el techo se cubre con hojas de palmera, y se llama guaño."

These palmleaf-covered roofs are very light and cool, and they look truly graceful. For the work of building this primitive habitation, the *guagiros* call in the assistance of their neighbours, as they do in erecting the log-houses in Canada (which they call summoning a *bee*) in a day at the longest: it is done with

the help of the *vecinos*. They then have a rude house-warming (which sounds terrible, however, in Cuba)! A sucking-pig is cooked, and the feast is devoured right merrily.

Afterwards, "forman por medio de tabiques" (these light thin walls are formed of canes), "tres habitaciones iguales, la de en medio es la sala en las otros dos, duerme la familia. Los tabiques se cubren de corteza de palmera, que destinada á este uso, toma el nombre de *yagua*." The house is finished entirely in two or three days. There are two *puertas*, but no windows. These *puertas* are also formed of the bark of the palm trees, *yagua*. "Y," continues the account, "no estan unidas al edificio sino por la parte superior, de manera que se abren perpendicularmente, y permanecen suspendidas por medio de una vara de hierro que las sostiene en el aire durante el dia." At night this bar of iron serves to fasten the doors with.

Generally, in front of this picturesque and rural abode there is another *cabaña*, of two departments, one of which is used as a kennel and stable during the continuance of the raiuy season, and the other is the kitchen—a very simple one. If you go in you will see a confusion indeed, "en el fondo de la cocina y puestas junto

á la pared, estan colocados tres enormes piedras que sirven de hornillas encima una olla,—y alrededor del fuego bananas buniatos y papas en profusion." Besides, there are chairs, stools, cups of the humblest materials, earthen dishes, dogs, birds, chickens, people reposing on the rough table or floor, birds'-nests full of eggs depending from the bamboos, and a tremendous mastiff, that growls frightfully, and shows his teeth threateningly, if a leaf falls.

This rural lodge is surrounded by magnificent trees which a king might envy, loaded with the most exquisite fruits, some of enormous size—the *papayo* and *plátano*—with their huge leaves, the *alcanforero*, and the beautiful *arbol del pan*, that might feed a whole regiment in a time of famine; the odoriferous *vainilla*, and thousands of cactuses in flower, coiled, and *enlazados graciosamente*, with a profusion of hanging plants, that unite the roofs of the *cabañas* with the stately trees, and shut out the piercing rays of the dazzling sun.

These *establecimientos de los guagiros* are not ordinarily destined for a long continuance. They frequently abandon the spot they had thus selected, and transport their *penates* to some other place. They again construct a rude

but graceful habitation in a few days; *y siembran en seguida las legumbres;* and wherever they fix themselves they find the same marvellous riches of Nature ready to surround and adorn their homes. However simple their *cabañas* may be, the *entourage* is worthy of an imperial palace.

Sometimes the *guagiro* takes a piece of ground that belongs to nobody, and in general he prefers this; but if he is particularly pleased with a bit of land that already has a *dueño* (a master), conditions are then entered into, as in Europe. I should think, however, he must have less and less opportunities of doing this in this highly cultivated and flourishing island. The *cosechas* (crops) are wonderfully abundant, and, with very little care, this fertile soil will produce *muchas cosechas* in the year. The beasts in Cuba are generally fed on *maloja* (I think this is exactly the same as Guinea-grass), and on maize; and the *guagiros* generally provide this for the great proprietors and planters.

The wives and daughters of the *guagiros* make "sombreros de paja y de las cuerdas de majagua," and this forms their chief or only occupation. They have always a slave, however moderate may be their means, to do all the

household work. They say these *guagiros* are very chivalrous husbands, and may often be seen carrying, themselves, the *tapete* (small square carpet) to church, for their wives to kneel upon.

The *guagiro* is quite a *dandy* with regard to his appearance. His mornings are generally passed at the cock-fights—which are as popular here almost as in Mexico—and his evenings in dancing or singing to his guitar, if unmarried, generally before the *estancia* of his lady-love. He is, in his own way, a poet and a hero too; and if by chance he should encounter a rival *guitarrero*, singing sonnets to his *querida*, a duel with their knives takes place on the spot. If he receives a wound, he springs on his gallant horse, and darts through the *cañaverales* (the cane-plantations), and hurries away to seek a chirurgeon, that he may appear next day at the accustomed spot again, to defy his rival, and prance and *caracolear*, guitar in hand, before his *amada*.

The *corcel* has his bridle generally adorned with numerous knots of bright-coloured wool, and the *frontil* has the same ornaments. He himself has a *sombrero de paja*, with an immense brim. A brilliantly-coloured scarf is tied round his waist, with the ends floating.

*zapatos de tafilete* (morocco leather shoes) of some gay colour, with silver spurs: from his beautifully-embroidered *cinturon* (belt) hangs his *machete*, with a silver hilt encrusted with precious stones, and there, too, is his dagger with its ebony handle. When on business, he is not ashamed to carry a sack fastened to his shoulders, and when on a pleasure-excursion, on the saddle of the horse you may spy the *guitarra* and the *quitasal* of his fair *señorita*, the amiable *guagira*.

On his business-expeditions he goes from place to place, to *Ingenio* and *Cafetal*, to sell his fruits and collect his money. Then he returns to eat an excellent dinner, and to smoke the most exquisite "cigarros elaborados por su mujer ó por su querida." His horse and his *machete* (after the *querida* and *mujer*, we will hope) are his greatest treasures. The *machete* is not only an indispensable weapon of defence against robbers, rivals, &c., but is the article in which he exhibits his chief luxury and splendour, and his *corcel* is also very necessary to him in this *vida vagabunda* in which he delights, and is often an object almost of adoration to him. But the reader will be tired of *guagiros*.

There are many Chinese labourers here now, and they are said to work very hard and well.

Why do they not try them in Jamaica? It is said the Coolies have failed there. I was amused at an anecdote concerning the Chinese that Captain A—— told me the other day. It occurred when he was on the coast of China in a merchantman—I think at Canton. The ship was constantly robbed at night by very expert—not housebreakers, certainly, but ship-breakers, I must call them. The weather was exceedingly hot and close, and it was necessary to leave the port-holes open for air. The cunning Chinese *ladrones* availed themselves of this circumstance, and introduced themselves into the apertures by night very adroitly and silently. Their toilet, it appears, was of the most primitive possible description, and consisted wholly and solely of a copious supply of oil to lubricate their bodies. They thus made themselves as slippery as eels, and if detected, eluded the grasp of the victimized mariners, and plunged back into the water. Their long tails (which would otherwise have afforded capital handles) were abundantly provided with fish-hooks, sharp knives, pins, nails, &c.—in short they were made quite a *chevaux de frise*, in order that any one seizing them should rapidly let them go again.

One of those *sharp sharpers* paid a visit one

night to the cabin of a young officer, who woke, and despite of oil and fish-hooks, took a good gripe at the interloper and held on like grim death with one hand, while with the other, armed with a stout cutlass, or some weapon of the kind, he actually inflicted the grim death aforesaid on the rascally son of the flowery central land, who thus, like a celestial Paul Pry, had dropped in literally in the cool of the evening. The officer flung the body into the sea, and it was found afterwards by the indignant Chinese, and a mighty hubbub was raised. It was discovered by some means, or at any rate shrewdly suspected, that the act had been committed on board the merchant ship, and the mandarins insisted that the offender should be given up to them. It happened that the butcher of the ship, at this juncture, committed suicide. They bethought themselves of dressing him up in the officer's clothes, and formally exhibited the body to the mandarins, who were invited on board—peacock-feathers, buttons, and all. The mandarins were informed that the unfortunate officer, struck with remorse, had put an end to his existence. But our good friend, John Chinaman, was not to be thus easily imposed upon. He declined putting any faith in the outer barbarians' bare asser-

tions, and proceeded to examine the corpse. Immediately that the mandarins noticed the hands of the deceased Knight of the Cleaver, they exclaimed that those were not the hands of an officer, and demanded that the real offender should be forthwith produced. With great difficulty the young man was secreted, and his life preserved from the vengeance of the Celestials.

I intend to leave a trunk here, with all the things I set most value on, for fear of accidents on the Isthmus, and to take as little luggage as possible, as on such expeditions it is very inconvenient: "Ojalá hubiese empezado antes ésta reformá." There is a report that the "Georgia" is in sight. I shall not see much of the Havana this time, but I hope to visit it again on my return; it is so interesting and beautiful an island.

I must go and take leave of my American acquaintance, Mrs. ——. She is going with her husband and little girl back to the United States. They have taken passages on board the "Ysabel Segunda," and they fear she will be very crowded, as they find the Italian operatic company are going by the same steamer, on their way to New York, where they are going to perform. Mrs. —— is in very de-

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licate health, suffering from that fell disorder so common in the United States, consumption. She came to Havana by medical advice, and great numbers of Americans come here annually on the same account. I hear that many go also to Jamaica, and to Santa Cruz. Mrs. W——, another American lady who was staying at this hotel, and with whom I have become acquainted, is just gone to make a tour of the island. She sings beautifully, and her little daughter is extraordinarily handsome; she has lived a great deal in Europe, chiefly in Italy. I have heard since her departure that she is anxious to introduce some improvements in the railroads here, which are of *her own* invention.

The "Georgia" has arrived. We shall have but little time now to make any farther preparations. *Tanto mejor*, for as long as one has time one fancies something may be better arranged, or is requisite. General C—— has kindly called to tell me he is going on board the "Georgia" this morning, and will do all he can to arrange for us to go, but she is expected to be very full. She is a magnificent vessel of about three thousand tons.

When these enormous American steamers first came to Havana, there was a report that it was doubtful whether they could get in

through the narrow entrance to the harbour; however, that was found to be of easy accomplishment. The "Georgia" is said to be a very fast vessel, with excellent accommodations, and a most gentlemanlike captain. We take leave of this delightful hotel with regret. Mr. Fulton, the excellent proprietor, has spared no pains to render us as comfortable as possible. Chloe is very unhappy to part with the "lilly missy," as she calls her in her broken English, and her picturesque jet black daughter (a girl of about fourteen), whose name is "Lily," is very sorry, too, for V—— and she were great friends, and equally devoted to a huge and very magnificent macaw (which, however, I think is more like Madame Calderon's description of the Huacamaya than a macaw). This splendid creature Lily is constantly seen carrying on the top of her sable woolly head, like a most stately and dazzling helmet; a very uncomfortable headdress, I should think, inasmuch as it was perpetually biting at her wool (that did not matter, it was so thick), but her forehead came in sometimes for a snap; and then the *cap did not fit*, and occasionally the creature half fell, and struggled on again with many flutterings and clawings—but Lily only laughed the more, and showed her lightning-like white teeth.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ARRIVAL AT PANAMA. — THE "GEORGIA."—KINDNESS AND ATTENTION OF LIEUTENANT PORTER. — DEFICIENCY OF FRESH WATER.—AN ALARM ON BOARD.—ITS CAUSE.—BUSTLE OF PREPARATION TO LAND AT CHAGRES. — THE STOUT LADY AND HER TRUNK.—ARRIVAL AT CHAGRES.—POLISHED MANNERS OF AMERICAN GENTLEMEN.—THE BAR OF CHAGRES.—DIFFICULTY OF LANDING AND OF PROCURING LODGINGS.—APARTMENTS AT SENOR ——'S.—GENERAL ASPECT OF CHAGRES.—THE CASTLE OF SAN LORENZO. — ITS PRESENT CONDITION. — POPULATION OF CHAGRES. — ADVENTURERS TO CALIFORNIA. — START FOR GORGONA.

We have arrived at Panama in perfect safety, and the glorious Pacific, that mightiest world of waters, is at this moment rolling its majestic waves under my windows as I write. I must give an account, as well as I can, of our voyage and journey.

Through General C——'s kind offices everything was most comfortably and delightfully arranged for us on board the magnificent steamer "Georgia," and through his considerate attention and kindness I had also the advantage and comfort of an agreeable acquaintance with

an amiable American lady on board, who was going with her little boy to join her husband in California.

This steamer is commanded by an officer of the United States navy, Lieutenant Porter, son of the celebrated Commodore Porter. It is impossible anywhere to meet with a more perfect, high-bred, and finished gentleman than Lieutenant Porter. He seemed indefatigable in his kind endeavours to render the passengers comfortable, and his courteous attentions to all could not be too highly praised. There was an immense number of passengers altogether, chiefly deck passengers, *en route* to California (report said thirteen hundred, but I believe that was a little exaggeration), and yet everything was conducted with as much order and regularity, and the ship was as perfectly quiet as if there had only been thirty. Our cabins were large, and exceedingly commodious and particularly nicely furnished. Muslins embroidered with different rich patterns and colours, formed the blinds and curtains to the berth : they had a very cool and pretty effect. There were also green *jalousies* to the windows. We had a capital Welsh stewardess, a most civil and attentive one ; and the steward was the very person for that arduous office.

The first day we dined in the saloon; but it was very hot, in consequence of its being necessary to have lighted candles there, even in the broadest day-light. The rest of the time we dined in our cabins, where it was very pleasantly cool, considering the state of the atmosphere. An acquaintance of Mrs. H——, a very stout lady, seemed to suffer much from the heat of the weather, but did not appear to become in the least thinner in consequence; and yet she seemed to live only on air, and that air was only what her fan procured for her. She was a very good-humoured and pleasing person; and must be one of great energy and resolution, for she is on her way to California, having determined on going there, and making a fortune for her grand-children—so she told my maid. Though very stout indeed, I should not have thought her old enough to have such relatives; but I am sure they ought to be both proud of, and grateful to their enterprising and go-a-head grandmamma. I think I never saw a more benevolent and amiable countenance.

We had an excellent voyage to Chagres; the only drawback was a short supply of water. The captain had waited a long time at Havana for an additional provision, but

from some dilatoriness or neglect of the natives, it came not, and he was obliged to start without it. Sea-water and soap go very ill together. How would the reader like to cleanse his face by rubbing it against a grindstone? I think the salt-water and soap seem pretty nearly as rough. It is still more disagreeable to rinse the mouth with it; but those were very trifling disagreeables, and of little moment.

Our voyage otherwise was uninterruptedly agreeable, except one little alarm which, perhaps, may amuse the reader, and I will repeat it for his edification. A day or two before we arrived at Chagres, there had been a little excitement among the deck-passengers — we were told, in consequence of one of them losing some money, and I believe his watch. Suspicion fell upon one of his companions. They were all going to California, where from the mixed state of society, the vast assemblage of people from all parts of the world, and the not yet thoroughly organized system of government at the mines, &c., the most uncompromising severity, and rigid laws against all similar offenders were rendered necessary. There had been threats muttered of Lynch law, we were told, but I did not place much reliance on these reports, as the passengers seemed so

well-disposed, respectable, and orderly a set of persons. This little anecdote will partly show how philosophically Americans will sometimes take matters where their interference would be utterly useless and hopeless.

At the dead of night (an ominous beginning!) I was awakened by an immense noise on deck, like a furious stamping and pushing, and as I fancied, shrieks and expostulations. On the promenade that goes all round the ship, several mattresses were placed every night, for the accommodation of some of the passengers, for whom there was no room elsewhere. The night was suffocatingly hot, and the cabin-windows were partially opened so as to allow a passage to the outward air through the closed blinds. As I have very quick ears, and the alarm made one more than usual on the *qui vive*, I heard one of the passengers call out to another something like this :

"What in thunder 's the matter up there, sir ?—do you hear that infernal noise ?"

"Yes, sir ;—guess they 're throwing that man overboard they talked of lynching to-day."

"Wal, sir, I do suppose that 'll be it."

"Yes, sir."

"Good night, sir !"

"Good night to you, sir !"

For my part I felt pretty sure all was over, for the tremendous scrambling and struggling and yelling had suddenly ceased. No doubt the poor victim, maddened and desperate, had fought like a demon for life for a brief while, but overpowered by numbers, had been plunged into a watery grave.

I rushed into the cabin where the two maids slept, anxious to impart the dreadful news, and horrify *them* at least. I found them already listening horror-struck, to the noise, and in great fear that the terrible event alluded to had happened. Presently, in the now deep stillness, I heard a loud pattering of rain, it came louder and louder, and there was another (though not so violent) rush and struggle on deck. I then almost instantly guessed what the real state of the case was. A shower of rain had come on suddenly, and all had been hurrying for shelter, and trying to shield themselves in various ways from its pitiless pouring. This, in fact, was the real truth, thank Heaven! and I do not think the idea of lynching had ever been seriously entertained.

A little while before we arrived at Chagres, the bustle and stir in the ship were prodigious; and I am sorry to say, the captain was taken very ill, and was confined to his cabin part

of the day. At last Chagres came in view, and before long, the hubbub in the steamer became more "fast and furious." Everybody wanted their trunks and portmanteaus, and everybody in their hurry, got hold of somebody else's. My poor stout friend, who seemed in the greatest and most imminent danger of melting away altogether in the heat, and whom I shall call Arethusa, was *minus* a large trunk, which seemed to be all the world to her. Her patience and good-humour were inexhaustible, but she was evidently in deep perturbation about it. She described it in a panting breathless "hue and cry," *de vive voix*,—"it might be known among a million;" it was a veteran trunk, covered with conspicuous scars, each well patched over with tin; its shape and size, too, were particular. Every sort and kind of trunk, case, box, &c., came up but that. Everybody seemed to feel for, and with her, she was so good-natured, gentle, and amiable.

The poor lady fanned away, *almost* frowned, and watched that yawning grave, the hold, disgorge from its capacious maw, legions of boxes, chests, and packing-cases, till even half a forest of trees appeared to view—an American Birnam wood on the route to California. (Perhaps

the transplanter imagines that these trees in their new soil, will produce fruits of gold, and that he will have a true Hesperides there.) The anxious Arethusa, almost in despair, called "*Hold*, enough!" At last there were some tidings of the missing trunk having been seen somewhere, and the poor lady breathed again, —by the help of her faithful fan.

The rush into the different boats, canoes, and *dugouts* that were ready to convey passengers to the shore, which was about a mile off, was tremendous: each was anxious to get the first canoe at reasonable prices, and for a short time, the scene beggared all description. We looked on at the little civil war that was raging, in peace, from our cabin windows, and I was very glad to take the advice the captain sent me, to remain quietly till the afternoon, when the bustle and confusion would be over. I had a letter from Messrs. —— at Havana, to Señor ——, requesting him to see that everything was arranged satisfactorily for us, and to engage a canoe for us, &c. Mrs. H——d was so kind as to take charge of this note for me, and as without loss of time she had gone on shore with her friends, I had no fear but that we should have a good canoe secured for us.

In the afternoon the captain was good enough, ill as he was, to come to the ladies' saloon to take leave of us, and give us all the advice he could respecting the journey across the Isthmus, which he was well acquainted with, having very lately gone over it. It is impossible for any one to have been more courteous and obliging than the distinguished commander of that Leviathan steamer was, and his counsel was invaluable to us. He took care that we should have a most commodious and safe boat to take us on shore, and sent an officer with us, to see us established in comfortable quarters, till the canoe should be ready, on the following morning, to proceed with us to Gorgona or Cruces.

Truly grateful for all his solicitude and attention, we took leave of him with the most sincere wishes for his restoration to health. I have before this been convinced, that no manners on earth can be more thoroughly distinguished, noble, and gracefully polished than those of a high-bred American gentleman; nay, I doubt whether any can quite equal them, except some of our own gentlemen—it is the truth, and therefore I will say it. I never saw a truer exemplification of this, than in the gentleman I have just spoken of.

There is no shelter at Chagres whatever for ships, and when the sea is at all agitated, the communication with the shore must be exceedingly difficult and perilous: there is an extremely dangerous bar with but little depth of water.

Our boat rejoiced in the name of "Jenny Lind," and the proprietor of it, an American, Captain Taylor, who is settled at Chagres, and owns a goodly number of boats, which ply on the river Chagres, and who seemed well-known to the officer of the "Georgia," who was with us, told me he was a relation of General Taylor, and that he had served through the whole of the Mexican war. When he found we had lately been in Mexico, he asked many questions with great interest respecting the present state of the country, and was anxious to know if we had seen different battle-fields in which he had borne part, and suffered, and which he commented on with much animation.

When we reached the landing-place, we found it a matter of difficulty to transfer ourselves from the boat to the shore: there was a huge quantity of slimy alluvial mud to be traversed with nothing but the rudest and most distant apology for a wooden pier, con-

sisting of a few half-rotten planks laid on some stakes. It was not without some exertion that we scrambled on to the solid ground.

Mr. —— then accompanied us to the abode of Señor ——, as I was anxious to know if the letter had been received, and a *cayuca* secured. Señor —— was away, "up on the hill," said some of the retainers, with the characteristic laziness and *nonchalance* of the natives. When would he be back? "Quien sabe?" At length, however, we found a more intelligent Grenadian, who told us the letter had been received at the house, in the absence of Señor R——, agent for the Royal Mail Steam Company, and that it was awaiting his return, which would probably take place very soon. This civilized being then begged we would accept a seat while measures were taken for securing us a comfortable domicile for the night.

The officer of the "Georgia," whom I before mentioned, immediately went over to what is called the American town, where almost all the Americans take up their abode, and where, I hear, there are some very fair hotels (one called the "Crescent City Hotel") but before long he returned, and strongly recommended us to remain in the native town, as, contrary to expectation, many of the lately arrived

travellers, having been totally unable to provide themselves with *cayucas*, in consequence of the immense demand, were imperatively compelled to wait till the morning's dawn at Chagres. All the best accommodations were consequently engaged.

In the meantime, Señor —— returned from his excursion, and after reading the letter from Havana, entreated us to remain there, instead of attempting to go to the American town, and it was finally arranged we should do so. A capital room was given us, and one for the two maids close by: we had our own provisions, and therefore required but very little. Our apartment was charmingly cool. We had to ascend by a ladder to it; but once there, it was very pleasant: two large windows without glass, but with shutters, admitted a delightful current of fresh air. This large airy apartment was open to the roof, which towered at a great height above us, and there was on one side only a sort of high parapet wall. Ours seemed to be the only room on that floor; we had thus the view of the whole of the enormous and lofty thatched roof, and if we leaned over the wooden parapet, that of an immense space, something like a great warehouse, filled with a heterogeneous

assemblage of countless articles, while on a sort of gallery inside, that ran partly round the walls, were festooned strings of onions, whose fragrance would have been rather overpowering to our olfactory nerves, but for the quantity of fresh air that circulated through the large rambling building.

By the way, Señor —— told me a dreadful fire had lately consumed a fine house he possessed here, and which he had occupied only a short time previous to our visit. We saw from our windows the blackened remains of this mansion, which had all the appearance of having been very extensive, and part of the crowded heaps that encumbered the clay floor of the building we were in, was the rescued but injured furniture belonging to it. Señor —— told us he had quite lately also lost his father, and a child, and that his wife was ill. Under these circumstances I felt loth to stay, but he insisted on our so doing.

There were two little couch-like beds in our handsome loft, with pretty pillows covered with muslin, and trimmed with lace: some very good-natured smiling mahogany-coloured damsels came to offer their services. I thought they were domestics belonging to the establishment, but found afterwards they were relations

of either Señor or Señora R——. They took our chocolate to prepare, and soon returned with cups, &c., and the chocolate hot and foaming, of which we partook, and in a little while we went to rest.

I have as yet said nothing of the appearance of this much-vituperated, and I think often misrepresented, place. Of course the ground is low, immediately on the river; but at a little distance beyond, it gradually rises till it presents the appearance of picturesque and beautiful wooded hills, giving a romantic variety to the scene. Certainly, where the Americans have betaken themselves, there is a low and marshy flat, that in the rainy season (which lasts here about ten months!) must be a sea of mud: it is said by the Americans, that the summits of the highest hills afford hardly any security against mud, at that extraordinarily "juicy season."

There is only one church at Chagres—of course a Catholic one — and in its construction it is as unpretending as the bamboo houses of the people. These houses, which are nearly as light as so many balloons, mostly consist of bamboo canes, which are thonged and fastened to some slight frame-work of more substantial timber, all covered over with the leaves or the

limbs of the cabbage palm, or the cocoanut. They have no chimney at all. They all assume to a foreign eye a very strange and fantastical, but I think picturesque, appearance.

The town proper—the Chagres of the natives—lies on the north bank of the river Chagres, about a hundred yards or so from the open sea, and contains about a hundred of these huts skreened by their profuse coverings of palm-leaves. A sudden bend in the river, and a tongue of land running out into the sea, have caused the town to assume the shape of a semi-crescent, and the former almost entirely veils it from view as you enter the mouth of the river. On this point of land stands the fine old castle of San Lorenzo, built by the conquering Spaniards, and in olden days stormed by the celebrated and oft successful buccaneer Morgan, who scaled it and levelled it, after a conflict, in which all but thirty-three out of three hundred and sixteen of the defenders were killed.

This fort in the time of its strength commanded the entrance to the river and the town, and to all appearance ought to have entirely locked up the Isthmus from an invading enemy. It must have been a majestic castle before it sank into the melancholy state of ruin and neglect in which we now beheld it.

It still bears the outward show of great strength and extreme durability; and if it should ever fall into the energetic hands of our noble transatlantic brothers, it is still susceptible of being made an exceedingly strong and important post. It is surrounded by high ramparts in which are mounted perhaps nearly thirty brass guns; there are bomb-proof casemates, and capacious store-houses, large enough to store provisions for the garrison, which might last them for a long space of time. But on whatever side you look, Time, the conqueror's conqueror, seems to reign triumphant: everywhere his obliterating foot-marks are to be seen, and the castle seems a mournful mockery of its former stately self.

The precipitously steep and inaccessible rock protects it from all assault on every side but one, and on that it is guarded by an outwork flanked by tottering towers at the angles. This is provided with cannon, in a rusty condition; indeed, the whole is in a dreary state of dilapidation: this outwork is commanded itself by the interior fortifications. What a contrast it must present now to its former state when the proud Spanish grandees and hidalgos of old had rule over it! The Americans say this is entirely owing to the indolence

and supineness of the "black republicans." They seem in general to look upon these as hardly a degree removed from the negroes. Certainly this Castle of San Lorenzo presents a truly melancholy appearance.

I am told the guns, some of brass, and others of iron, instead of standing in their former threatening attitude, have been allowed almost to tumble down. Some of these guns are very fine ones : a part of them bear the date of 1703, and others are much older. Thousands of pounds of powder remain in the magazine, in a lamentable state of ruin, and the magazine is fast shrouding up, and destroying in its decay all evidence of its existence.

The castle is connected with the before-mentioned outwork by a drawbridge, and another connects this with the approach from without. Enormous water-tanks, guns, powder, balls, stores, and everything necessary during a long siege, indeed, are there to be found, except provisions, and these doubtless have long ago been appropriated and despatched by the natives, rendered indolent by their climate, and apt to depend almost entirely upon the abundant yield of tropical productions for their livelihood. The crumbling walls of this once stately stronghold seem now to be the favourite promenade, the

chosen "Alameda" for the agile wild goat, and that scavenger-general (in these parts of the world), the unprepossessing buzzard.

Notwithstanding the state of neglect in which it is now, it is easy to imagine that this fortress was formerly (as it is said to have been), one of the strongest erected by the Spaniards along the whole of their coast; for it still bears striking witness to this fact, despite of its ruined entrenchments and its rusty guns, its dilapidated watch-towers, its tottering walls, its crumbling battlements, decayed magazines, and damaged powder.

At some distance from the works stands a detached battery, on the height which commands the town and river of Chagres, but it is destitute of communication with the castle. Some superannuated-looking and miserably appointed soldiers are to be seen loitering about the neglected works. Once more, what a change would take place if this were transferred to the hands of the Americans—what a flourishing city would shortly be seen here; and how would this decayed castle regain all its pristine power and more!

Speaking *cosmopolitanically* and philanthropically, I feel one ought to wish the Americans to take to themselves, not only this, but

many other portions of this vast continent; but, as an English woman, I suppose I should not give utterance to the wish. Yet, if all illiberal prejudice and antagonizing influences and unfortunate jealousies could be annihilated, and the United States and England would fairly go hand-in-hand in the work of regeneration—or rather creation—what might not such a co-operation effect — what would, or could withstand them?

But England is too calculating; beginning now,—not to decline, I do not think or believe that,—but to lose some portion of that vigorous and restless energy, which *must* advance,—and to be more anxious about retaining than gaining; and her object is, perhaps, yet more to check and interdict others from snatching at coveted prizes, than to seize them herself. But if this policy should become habitually hers, it will ultimately prove vain—the Americans will eventually triumph; and if they are wise and liberal themselves, and allow the forms of government under their general sway to be adapted to the nature and habits of the different people, they will yet rule and govern all this hemisphere *at least!* But this is not a subject to be superficially treated.

As to the population of the town of Chagres,

I suppose the permanent inhabitants may number about three hundred ;—nearly all of these are black, or, at least, of the very blackest bronze it is possible to imagine. We were much amused in watching some of these people, especially the women, whose costume (and particularly their *coiffure*) is very unique. Their jet black strong coarse hair is sometimes made to stand out on each side of their heads, like huge heavy black wings, frizzled to the last degree : one would almost think the great vultures, besides being scavengers, are the fashionable hairdressers here. The ladies have a *cigarito* occasionally in their mouths, and sometimes behind their ears, ready for use : a little cotton drapery completed their costume. Crowds of children, looking like little Chinese idols, and not at all remarkable for symmetry of shape, having rather a dropsical appearance, rolled about in the sun till one thought they must be baked to dumplings.

Every now and then some California-bound Americans would make their appearance among these sauntering groups. It would be impossible to imagine any human beings more the moral antipodes of each other than the eager, bustling, rapid, impatient Yankees and these quiet, peaceable, deliberate, and inanimate

natives. It is said, however, when roused or irritated, they can be energetic, and as brave as lions.

The Californians are wildly impatient to get on to their destination, and afraid of missing the next steamer to San Francisco. They are almost always to be seen impetuously gesticulating, imploring, threatening, or encouraging the lounging boatmen, who are employed generally unconcernedly re-thatching with split palm-leaves the awnings or coverings of their primitively-fashioned canoes. These boats were to be seen the preceding day by hundreds beached on the oozy mud, and made fast to stakes or pegs in front of the habitation of the various proprietors. On the second day, comparatively few were left, and for those few large prices are naturally demanded. All who were able seem willing to close with any terms; but those who were not, were of course earnestly remonstrating and arguing the point, and the vociferations and gesticulations were all in *italics*.

For our canoe which underwent a lengthened course of preparation and re-thatching, I found I should have to pay seventy dollars. This was engaged to take us to Gorgona, and I paid to Señor R—— forty dollars more, for

a respectable person to go with us, as far as that place, who understood the habits of the natives, and the best places for stopping at, and who also would engage mules for us there. We waited hour after hour in vain expectation for our boat, with our bonnets on; fortunately the day was not very sultry. As to the swamps we had heard so much of, where we were we saw nothing of them, and while thus waiting we sate at an open window in our cool, lofty apartment, inhaling a deliciously fresh breeze.

At last, to our joy, the thatching was pronounced complete, and we sallied forth, expecting to find an awning of considerable dimensions, and of the most elaborate workmanship, from the time that had been employed in its construction. What was our dismay to find one of the smallest proportions imaginable, and which it was next to impossible to crawl under, or when that was accomplished, to remain beneath long without being cramped like poor Mrs. Noble, in the cage she was carried about in, in China! But no time was to be lost, and, indeed, we were all impatience to see the beautiful Isthmus, remembering the glowing descriptions of Mr. Bayard Taylor and others, of its extraordinary natural attractions.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE RIVER CHAGRES. — THE BOAT. — THE ROWERS. — THEIR PECULIAR AND VOCIFEROUS SONGS. — GATUN AND MILLA-FLORES. — EXQUISITE BEAUTY OF THE SCENERY ON THE BANKS OF THE CHAGRES. — INNUMERABLE FLOWERS AND RADIANT BIRDS.—STRANGE AND PRODIGAL INTERTEXTURE OF PARASITICAL PLANTS. — ENORMOUS AND BRILLIANT BUTTERFLIES. — LAS DOS HERMANAS. — ACCOMMODATIONS AT THAT PLACE.—THE HOSTESS AND HER ADOPTED DAUGHTER.—AMERICANS BOUND FOR CALIFORNIA. — SCENERY DURING THE PROGRESS OF THE VOYAGE. — SAN PABLO.—AN ACCIDENT. — THE LADY WITH HER IMMENSE COIFFURE. — MONTE CARABALI.—ARRIVAL AT GORGONA.

Ours was a light and graceful-looking craft, and we soon discovered she was one of the speediest on the river.

After taking leave of Señor R——. we shot off at a merry pace, sitting under parasols and umbrellas and veils, which tolerably skreened us from the burning sun, and taking it by turns every now and then to squeeze ourselves under the apology for an awning, where we found it comparatively cool, but, from the necessarily cramped position which one had to maintain, it was not so pleasant otherwise as the outside.

We had no seats but our trunks; however, the boat progressing rapidly, soon bore us into scenes of such incredible enchantment and beauty, that all minor inconveniences were pretty well forgotten. We seemed transported to a new world—all was so indescribably wild and beauteous around us. The astonishing excess and superabundance of the gorgeous chaos of vegetation on all sides, even outdid that of the Tierra Caliente of Mexico, and it is difficult to say more.

The sun raged like a blazing tempest overhead, pouring down cataracts of golden flame, as it were, over all these matted masses of flowery and leafy luxuriance, without being able to penetrate their dense and intricate foldings. Our native rowers plied their broad paddles vigorously and swiftly, singing incessantly, and sometimes screeching like a whole flock of peacocks, with a hundred-horse power of lungs, Indian songs, with Spanish words; one of which songs was rather remarkable, inasmuch as, instead of being, as usual, full of the praises of some chosen fair, it was nothing but a string of commendations on the beauty and grace of the singer. "I have a beautiful face," "I am very beautiful," &c.

When we passed any boat,—and in our flying

craft, with our light luggage, we shot by immense numbers,—the yells of triumph, I suppose, of our boatmen, and a sort of captain they had (who was clad in very gay-coloured garments with a splendid scarlet scarf or sash to denote his rank, I conjecture) were literally almost deafening, and the beaten rowers were not slow to answer them, with shouts and shrieks of merry defiance, reproach, or mockery. It seemed to me on these occasions they interrupted the usual tenour of their songs, and entered mutually into a marvellously rapid impromptu description of their respective passengers, of their country, and their destination. Each sentence ended with an unearthly yell, that might have frightened all the furies, and quite electrified the lazy caymen that we saw taking their after-dinner nap in the ooze, as we darted by them.

On these occasions, Señor ——'s respectable coloured clerk, inspired by the ear-piercing strains, joined with all his might and main; and I am not sure his respectabilityship did not make the most noise of all, or at any rate, the most delirious attempts so to do. The extraordinarily rapid powers of utterance of these wild men of the woods and the water, would have astounded Mr. Charles Mathews himself.

Such a volley of volubility, I think, I never heard—it was the most distracting, bewildering, vocal velocity conceivable.

But they did not neglect their rowing for their singing. We sped on wondrously, and many an American who had started long before us, but was dragging along in a heavily-laden canoe, or clumsily-built dug-out, looked with envy on our little light craft. "Wal, now," I heard one cry out, lugubriously, with a melancholy shake of the head to his companions, "we did ought to have had that boat; that 's a fact." Poor people, they were in a lumbering huge canoe that crawled and crept along at a snail-like pace, but then they had vast piles of luggage, which would have swamped our little *cayuca* in no time.

From the intense heat we soon became very thirsty, and were going to dip our calabashes in the water and drink, when we were stopped by our black troubadours, who said the water was bad there, and we must wait for some little time till it was sweet and good. However, they soon stopped where there was a hut or two, and got us a couple of calabashes full of wholesome water from a spring. A poor anatomy of a dog came limping towards us, looking imploringly for something to eat; he

was quite a *squellette vivante*, and fell upon some biscuit we threw him with the greatest avidity. As to us, we fell upon the water almost as eagerly.

Gatun was the first settlement we stopped at: it was a miserable assemblage of cane hovels. Here our rowers rested awhile, and then went on to Millaflores, which name suits the scenery all along this miraculous river. I have said little about it yet, but be prepared, reader, for a great deal of garrulity in this never-ending ever-beginning topic. Oh, what magnificence of Nature! What overpowering and ineffable glory of magnificence! Your very thoughts seemed crushed beneath a whelming weight of splendour. All we could do was to stare and gaze, and utter broken exclamations of ecstacy. What a maze and mystery of unspeakable loveliness it was! the soaring hills of all imaginable shapes, bathed and buried in beauty and crowned with majestically-luxuriant woods to their very topmost summits. And such woods! it was a perfect blaze of vegetation, bewildering and half-blinding one.

The gorgeous countlessly-variegated trees of those woods were literally swathed and draperied over with dazzling scarlet and gold, the most vivid and refulgent! This, I believe,

was occasioned by the innumerable multitudes of orchideous, and other parasitical plants, especially the former, which flash and glow with the most resplendent and glorious colours, and wreathe and wind around the highest tops of the gigantic trees, completely covering them with showery veils and lustrous canopies of flowers, crimson, purple, intense scarlet, gold, blue, and all conceivable and inconceivable colours. Earth seems like a sun—a living sun —sparkling and quivering with all the beauties of the whole creation.

I never imagined anything so lovely as the exceeding superfluity of the blooms and foliage and verdure here. As to describing it soberly, it is impossible. The enormous variety and inconceivable profusion of queenly palms was beautiful beyond expression. And then *such* birds!—like flying bouquets of jewels, or rainbows, on wings, painting the fervid sunshine around them ten thousand colours: and in the evening the fire-flies made a most magnificent and tremulously-stirring illumination, till all life seemed light, and all light, life. As to the stars overhead, they shone out like little suns.

The river Chagres itself is beautiful: it winds and twists about like a brilliant serpent, most gracefully and changefully. The pro-

digious masses of vegetation pour down upon it, and seem as if they flung their glittering many-coloured chains on its bright waters to arrest its progress. In many places, enormous curtains and thickly-woven tapestries of foliage swept down, broidered and blazoned all over with sumptuous blooms, into the blue water; and in other parts the most fantastically-variegated and fairy-like garlands, festoons, and streamers quivered just over its surface, reflected therein in all their beauty. Wherever you turned, there was a sweeping, heaving, and gorgeous ocean of flowers and foliage; wherever you caught a passing glimpse of the inner depths of this world-within-world of beauty and glory, you saw wildernesses of creepers and parasites, in thousands of mazes and convolutions.

Some of the latter flowers, on these blossom-embroidered banks, had a most marvellous effect, apparently "doing business on their own hook;" for they seemed to be standing alone perfectly independent of any support. But I suspect, in reality, they were wreathed and re-wreathed, and piled and crowded over and around some irregular stumps of old trees, or chance block of stone — but in such unimaginable and luxuriant profusion that they

often formed, as it were, enormous towers and gateways, thus standing by themselves, of immense thickness and height. In short, they displayed all kinds of shapes, most fantastically diversified and varied.

Sometimes they appeared like huge triumphal arches, and sometimes of slenderer proportions, like soaring Turkish minarets; occasionally like the domes of Oriental mosques. At other times, there was a lovely vision of vast avenues of flower-garlanded bowers, vista beyond vista. In several places the sparkling river was almost bridged across by radiant blossomy boughs, a magic bridge of flowers, and rainbows, and meteors. It hardly seemed as if this abounding wealth and deluge of blooms could have sprung from earth's bosom, but as if the very firmament, "fretted with golden fire," must have rained down these superb and dazzling splendours from their own treasure-houses of starry glory, or poured part of themselves away, molten, over this over-illumined planet.

Through these gorgeous piles and masses of luxuriance flit not only the many-coloured birds I have mentioned; but colossal, dazzling, sumptuous butterflies, belonging only to the tropics, and nearly as large as birds—go flutter-

ing and glittering like showers of precious stones, tossed about by invisible genii.

These glorious forests are so thickly matted together, that not even the lightning can pierce them. I have just been looking at my little companion's description of the exquisite creepers, and all the wondrous effects their elaborate loveliness produces, and I see she likens them to quite different objects to what I have done: but such is their apparently inexhaustible profusion and pomp, and prodigality of growth, and variety of form, that a hundred people might very probably describe them all differently. I think *I* was most struck with the extraordinary triumphal arches and columns and castellated towers that they formed so exquisitely in their spontaneous, enchanted, flowery architecture, and *she* with the way in which they almost smothered the loftiest palms with their brilliant shrouds of coloured light, and streaming festoons and coronals, and then continually passed on to others, linking them together in beauty and enchantment.

We saw a good many Americans camping at a place, whose name I do not remember. The current began to run very strong, but our light boat still got on pretty fast. At last the rowers seemed to become exhausted,

and it was late in the evening when we arrived at a settlement called *Las dos Hermanas.*

It consists of a small number of straggling scattered huts, built on the brow of a headland that overhangs the stream just where the river takes a considerable sweep. Señor R——'s lieutenant went on shore immediately to get us as good accommodations as the place afforded, and we were soon ushered into an Indian hut, of which the proprietress was one of the most obliging and kind-hearted beings in the world. She showed us into a very comfortable room (always considering what Isthmus accommodations generally are said to be). The bamboo walls she proceeded very expeditiously and neatly to cover over with thick mats and hides, and a delightful little tent-like apartment she made of it.

She was accompanied by a smiling girl, who, she said, was her adopted daughter, and that her name was Pantaleone. Her own name, she told us, was Arquellina; so I could not but call them Harlequin and Pantaloon. Poor Harlequin was of a preposterous size, though amazingly active; Pantaloon did all the staring for her, and after we were gone, I think could have described us accurately enough for the "Hue-and-Cry" at least.

I cannot agree with the Americans about the natives. Not only here but almost everywhere else, we found them most good-natured, kind, inoffensive, and hospitable people. They are naturally slow, but with a little humouring, and good-tempered bantering, or gentle beseeching, they will make all the haste they can. For instance, the way in which our unwieldy Harlequin bustled and ran about for us was "a caution." She puffed and panted with the unwonted exertion, but looked the very picture of good-humour all the time. In fact, she seemed to grudge no trouble to make her foreign guests as comfortable as possible. She gave up a very snug room close to ours for the *femmes de chambre*, with two good hammocks in it; then she cooked our provisions for us capitally, and, till we retired for the night, kept up an incessant chattering, in which was mingled many an expression of kindly welcome and good will.

In short, she was the very best Harlequin in the world, not as regards rapidity and lightness of motion certainly, but in more solid qualities; and after she had affectionately bade us good-night, I looked forward to a very sound sleep on the little couch she had so carefully prepared.

But in that I was disappointed. Quantities of insects, chiefly ants, that appeared without end, tormented me the whole night, and it was only just at break of day that I fell into a little doze, (V—— happily slept well); but when morning dawned it was time to start, and after repeated rappings at the barricaded outside door, that would not have disgraced May Fair or Belgravia, and confused cries heard without, of *es muy tarde*, and *ya es hora de levantarse*, we got up, and fat Harlequin busied herself in preparing our *desayuno*, and brought us a delicious bowl of milk, which was very welcome and refreshing.

When I asked her what there was to pay, "Nothing," she said, "*Nada, nada.*" I told her that was quite out of the question; and after a little amicable altercation on the subject, she said whatever little trifle I liked to give. I presented her then with a "*gratification*," for which she thanked me heartily, and insisted on accompanying us down the steep bank to our *cayuca*. This poor, dear, plumpest of all imaginable Harlequins! how she waddled along down the abrupt descent! Once more I begged her not to trouble herself to come all the way, and she then took leave of us most kindly; and so did Pantaloon also, who was industriously con-

tinuing her occupation of staring, till her eyes seemed inclined to leave her head. Her mouth was wide open; and if she had partaken of the nature of the curious air-plants of China she would have thriven much that morning, I imagine, from the quantity of that element she must have imbibed.

After re-arranging our trunks a little, so as to make tolerably comfortable seats (of course without any backs to lean against), we started, and waved our last adieux to our kind Harlequin and Pantaloon. We passed numbers of canoes filled with Americans: a great many of these boats were manned by Negroes. Some appeared to move so slowly, as to be almost stationary, others were "snagged." Some of these, it appeared, had been all night on the river. Our boatmen, like the rest, had rejected their broad paddles, and taken to *palancas*, or poles, and our progress became slower and slower. We ran under the widely-overshadowing boughs of enormous trees, that bent their stately heads over the water, and made perfect tents with their far-spreading branches; and at such times we seemed enclosed in a large hollow sphere of emerald; all looked green within its leafy circle.

The current was exceedingly strong, and

many of the heavily-freighted clumsy boats we passed, seemed hopelessly fighting with it. The *palancas* splashed us terribly, and the boat had a quantity of water in it, but we got to the *rancho* of Palo Matida in very fair time.

The water of the river, we found, had long been sweet and wholesome, and often did we dip our calabashes into it, and drain a refreshing draught. The vocal performances of the crew became " fine by degrees, and beautifully less," as the toil of poling against the rapids grew more severe: a doleful quivering drawl, something like the tone of a superannuated parish clerk, took place of the wild shrieking songs that had made the woods and groves resound the day before.

Most beautiful was the scenery still, though its character was gradually becoming altered. The hilly peaks were higher; at some places, from the highest summits of the hills to the water, swept down a perfect cataract of trees —you almost wondered the solid hills did not come crashing down with them into the stream. They, and their curtaining superincumbent mass of blossoming parasitical plants, together with wild roses, and lilies, and other exquisite flowers, were wedged and welded together in one heaving, dense, and almost massive pall of sheeted

tapestries. From this still, silent, but glorious cataract of vegetation, shot, here and there, what seemed pillars of quivering, leafy, bloomy mist, delicate sprays, that appeared all made of rainbow and sunshine, and, in their turn, these were diversified and adorned by stray gauzy films, and floating shreds of gossamer-resembling and lightning-like shoots, many-coloured, and light as painted air, glancing like forked tongues of serpents on the sight, and seeming instinct with life; while with a rapid darting flight, resplendent butterflies, birds, and various insects, ruffled their surface.

In many parts these huge piles of vegetable growth looked more like thick, hardened incrustations of leaves and boughs, which no storm even could ever stir or pierce, than actually growing products of the soil. Altogether, Earth's great heart seemed to have overflowed here, and poured forth all its hidden treasures, blended, overcrowded, precipitated, and combined into a rich concentration of preciousness, without form or order.

We passed several encampments of Americans and settlements of the natives during the day. Among the latter, was Peña Blanca, a small assemblage of huts, which huts sometimes look like immensely tall gawky mush-

rooms, of most ephemeral construction, apparently. At one or two of these places we asked in vain for a draught of milk, though we caught a glimpse, we thought, of cows every now and then near the *ranchos*, tended by a little *vaquerillo*. As we went on, we overtook more and more boats, till the river seemed alive with them. Occasionally, the voyagers in them broke out into a cheery shout of "Ho! for California!" and sometimes called to us to know if we had come in the "Georgia." Most of them were hard at work, helping their boatmen to stem the stream, and urging them to go a-head.

We passed various other *ranchos*, and at one of them stopped for some time, that the little crew of the *cayuca* might rest and eat their dinner. We went by Agua Salud and Varro Colorado, and, still battling vigorously with the racing current, struggled past Palanquilla, and, as we advanced, we saw many marks of cultivation. Here and there were clearings—not very extensive indeed—but enough to admit of fields of Indian corn and *arroz* (rice), and plantain-walks. There were some beautifully shaped hills to be seen rising near the river-banks. One seemed particularly high: it was, as all the rest are, like

the rising sun, steeped in molten gold, and panoplied in a pomp of exuberant growths, among which were seen gloriously towering trees, all over-canopied and buried under hanging gardens in the air, of myriad-hued flowers, quite disturbing the quiet sultry atmosphere with beauty. But, partly in consequence of our boatmen having spent an unconscionable time at their dinner, partly arising from our not having started as early as we should have done, owing to my extreme sleepiness after the night of torment the ants and mosquitoes had given me, we were late: the evening began to grow dusky, the splendid living illumination of fire-flies commenced, and we were told it was necessary to stop at San Pablo, which was not a very prepossessing-looking place.

We were collecting together our carpet-bags, calabashes, and lighter luggage, when V——, forgetting for a moment how easily these *cayucas* are upset, though we had repeatedly been cautioned to move very carefully (and the boat had as nearly as possible been tilted over before, and had been almost filled with water),* jumped up very suddenly, and over

* An officer of the English navy, Capt. Foster of H. M. S. Chanticleer, was drowned here by such an accident. The boat was, however, of course, in the middle of the river.

went the boat. It righted, however, again; but she fell in the water, which was luckily not deep there, and, after a little delay, she scrambled into the canoe again, being helped by an American gentleman, who, seeing what had happened, instantly rushed to the spot, and, plunging into the water, rescued her. The danger was not of drowning, but of alligators.

We clambered up the steep precipitous bank which led to the collection of hovels called San Pablo, looking, as we followed the clerk and others to the little village, like a damp procession of naiades learning to be amphibious—for the boat had been completely deluged with water. The huts were very poor ones, but we succeeded in getting a pretty comfortable one detached from the rest, and where the good people lighted us a fire to dry our clothes. We were very glad to have a little supper after this, and disposed ourselves for rest after receiving a visit from the mistress of the huts, who was attired in a singular fashion. She had an immense shock-head of hair, grizzled till it seemed powdered over, and like twenty judges' wigs in one—nay, so enormous was this *coiffure* taht it looked more like a wigwam than a wig. She seemed to have run to head entirely.

Two of us reposed on buffalo hides and two on chairs (I was one of the occupants of the latter). All became quiet and still, except the monotonous but pretty cry of the bird that repeats "bohio" as plainly as possible. But presently, through the interstices of the canes, I thought I saw a figure moving stealthily near our hut. I looked closer through the bamboos (ours being a hovel of some architectural pretensions, they were woven pretty closely together!) : certainly an extraordinary form was creeping slowly towards us. It looked like a haystack stuck on a pole, or a colossal chicken-coop hoisted on a post, and by some magical means perambulating the grounds. However, on more attentive inspection, the mystery was solved — it was the proprietress of the huts, in her curious costume, which seemed more extraordinary than ever. Perhaps to scare away all other intruders, during the night, she had added to the formidable dimensions of her head-dress, where there seemed really a rather roomy loft to let. Her *chevelure* stuck out like a huge balloon of horse-hair round her head.

She crept slowly on and on, and pushed at our fastened door. I went and opened it, and after some difficulty she introduced her vast head, with all its outer works, into the cane

shed. I asked her what she wanted? "Only to have a little talk!" I thought it an unseasonable time, but did not like to say so, therefore I answered her queries as well as I could:—"Where did we come from? Where were we going to? Did we like the Isthmus? Surely we would go on to California? All the *estrangeras* who visited the Isthmus always went to California! or perhaps to Lima? Was this finer than my country?" So she ran on, in a whisper, lest she should disturb the sleepers; and at length, to my great relief, the balloon slowly rose, not exactly into the air—I almost secretly wished it might be carried up into the clouds! However, it took its departure, and the door was again re-barred and fastened; and nothing was heard but "Bohio! bohio." So I fell asleep, in peace, on the rickety chair I had taken possession of.

In the morning an American lady, who slept in the other cane cottage (both belonging to the same people, and like detached apartments of the same house—there were very likely more of them), came and knocked, and asked if we would like to start with her and her party. I was awake, but the others were sleeping, and as I knew it was now only five hours to Gorgona, I declined, and wishing her farewell, had a

little more rest, though very soon the bustle and stir incident to many departures from an encampment not far off, and from the village, roused me completely up, and my companions also. We made our arrangements for starting, and before long had a visit from the lady—the head personage in a double sense, who appeared to act the part only of a subordinate appendage to her own giant head-dress. She seemed hanging to it, like a tiny *parachute* to an immense balloon, such as I have before mentioned. She came with many kind salutations, and a welcome bowl of milk in her hand. But, alas! when this milk was tasted, it was found to have a terrible flavour of the strongest garlic. We therefore had some chocolate made, and soon were ready to start.

While tying on our bonnets, I was amused by accidentally hearing a lively conversation, in Spanish, between two of the native ladies, as to whether I was a princess or a countess: one inclined to the first, the other to the last. Words ran rather high; over and over again was repeated "Princesa—Condesa—si no! si," &c. I began to think I ought to enlighten them with some red-book explanations, and inform them I was not a princess, though my father is a prince, and so forth. But it is time to start, and

away we go, hurrying down the precipitously-abrupt bank, and hastily taking our seats in our *cayuca*, but not before one of the maids had received an invitation from the lady, not in, but *under* the balloon, which she so perseveringly carried about with her—to pass her days with her, in these bamboo cages of hers—"Gusta V. quedarse conmigo?" She received no answer but a laugh, not being understood; but when I translated the request, an energetic "no" was returned with an eloquent glance at the buffalo-hides, and walls of sticks and leaves. The good señora stared, with much incredulity and astonishment, at this rejection of her offer, but retained her good humour notwithstanding.

San Pablo, this village of cages, is very picturesquely situated on its steep bank. The beautiful Chagres makes a graceful sweep and bend here, and there is a clearing behind it extending to some distance; but this clearing is not formal and bare. There are lovely groups of trees left around the cane-sheds of the settlement, and among them some very lofty and umbrageous palms, and acacias of superb dimensions.

The *palancas* were again in requisition, and the current seemed extremely strong. About midway between San Pablo and Gorgona, rises

the stately hill, called Monte Carabali: it is a towering peak, and is said to be the only hill in the whole province from whence both oceans, the broad Atlantic and the grander Pacific, can be beheld at once.

Monte Carabali, like all the other heights here, was enrobed in the most effulgent forests, of which every colossal tree seemed clad in a lustrous armour of precious jewels of every hue. I am not sure that it was on this hill or another, that we saw one gigantic tree on the very summit, sheeted so with the most dazzling profusion of scarlet flowers, that it looked like an immense and high-soaring obelisk of fire, sending its intense blaze far into the glistening blue of the resplendent sky, and, as it seemed, scattering around sparkles and sheets of flame.

We had not gone very far on that day, before the hitherto brilliantly clear arch above us, showed at one point a threatening frowning cloud, which soon sent down upon us a tremendous shower. It appeared as if millions of wings were stirring among the many-sounding leaves that echoed the fast thick droppings of the rushing rain. Our canoe shot speedily under the tent-like shelter of an enormous tree, and we crept as well as we could beneath the ruins of our awning of palm leaves which afforded us

still some screen against the storm. In fact, the tree did not allow much of it to pass through its wilderness of boughs and leaves. Had it not been for my determination in insisting on the awning being left, we should not have had a shred of protection remaining, from it, either against the drops (of considerable size, I assure you) that found their way through our leafy canopy above, or against the burning sun that succeeded to the storm.

The evening before, finding, I suppose, the awning a little in their way, and that it made the boat somewhat heavier, the head man had relentlessly seized it, and began tearing it down: I stopped these unwarranted proceedings, desiring him in a rather authoritative manner to desist. He grumbled out it was *preciso* to get rid of it; I retorted it was *preciso* it should remain. He then ceased to contradict, but not to claw down the poor awning. I called out my auxiliary force in the shape of the coloured clerk, and he, after first siding with the enemy, on seeing I was determined to cut down all who opposed me,—of the *aguardiente*, for which they kept a bright look-out, returned to his duty, and issued the most imperative orders in my name and that of Señor R——, and of the central government

of New Granada to boot, for aught I know—that the palm-thatch should be left intact. But it stood in a tottering and precarious state, and required every now and then bandaging and propping up a little by a skilful hand.

When the storm cleared away, we started again, and beautiful were some of the long reaches of the shining river, where we floated between living walls of sculptured emerald,—formed of trees, embossed with myriads of variegated gem-like blossoms; and every leaf hung on those innumerable hosts of boughs and branches was quivering with the liquid diamonds of the raindrops, and sparkling and glancing in the golden sun, till really this world seemed too lovely almost for a temporary abode, and the sense of its stupendous beauty grew painful. For not only close at hand were these countlessly varied masses of luxuriance and splendour, but beyond rose hills on hills, all like insulated paradises soaring back again to the glorious heavens they seemed to have come from!

We arrived at Gorgona under an intensely burning sun. This place is about half a dozen miles below Cruces, but I had decided on riding from thence, in preference to going on to Cruces, in consequence of advice given to me at Chagres.

## CHAPTER XV.

GORGONA.—IMMENSE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS AT THAT PLACE. —THE NATIVE HOTEL. — THE HOST AND HIS DAUGHTERS.— A FIESTA. — THE WOMEN'S DRESSES. — THE TRUANT CLERK IN HIS SPLENDOUR. — HIS GLORY CHECKED. — HUNTING FOR MULES. — A PROJECTED RAILROAD THROUGH GORGONA. — "SAMMY," THE SERVANT AT THE HOTEL. — SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS DUTIES AND HOW THEY WERE PERFORMED.—HIS APPEARANCE.—SPREAD OF FEVER IN GORGONA.—MODE OF LADING MULES.—DEPARTURE OF FRIENDS FOR PANAMA.—PEDESTRIAN TRAVELLERS TO CALIFORNIA.—STANZAS SUGGESTED BY SEEING THEM.

GORGONA looked all alive, and seemed to be rather a considerable place for the Isthmus. The palm-thatched houses of the natives looked very picturesque there, many of them towering to an immense height, and appearing not unlike pictures I have seen of the great African Baobab tree (only higher and more tapering), with slight cane walls running up all round to meet the outward edge of the circle of its widely-spreading and high-reared boughs.

This Isthmusian town is situated on a very high and steep bank, up which it was rather hard work to climb under the scorching sun,

for our disembarkation there was accomplished under one of the most broiling skies I ever encountered. Close to the river were encamped immense numbers of Americans, who were waiting for mules, or reposing themselves, after perhaps working their way up the river, or who, from neglecting sanitary precautions, were suffering from the fever.

A Frenchman came up to me, and said he belonged to an excellent *posada* here, which he recommended, but I found it was much crowded and did not go to it. The American Hotel of Mr. Miller I heard was quite full, and I ultimately decided on going to a native hotel, which was kept by a Gorgonian, who rejoiced in a family of twelve daughters and I do not know how many sons. The dozen of daughters, as far as I saw of them, were very good-natured and very indolent, and had, like our gentle Pantaloon, a great talent for staring.

The house being full, they overflowed into a broad wooden gallery that surrounded it, and a few into the road even. When the burning sun drove them in, they were always in the way, standing in the porch and the narrow door-ways, and always busily engaged in some toilette offices, such as putting up their long, jet-black hair, fastening flowers in it, and

decorating themselves in various ways. I found it was a fiesta, and there was going to be a grand ball in the evening, where all the fashion and aristocracy of the place were to assemble.

It may be imagined that the fair residents of Gorgona looked necessarily very picturesque, when I tell you that they nearly all had a profusion of natural and beautifully-disposed flowers in their hair, which was sometimes amazingly luxuriant and occasionally gracefully braided, or with long jetty streamers flowing down almost to their feet. Their dresses of a light and delicate texture, were generally either snowy white or of a lovely rose colour, and on some occasions the white and rose colours were blended : around the corsage were very deep falls of lace ; the arms were bare.

One of mine host's twelve daughters is particularly pretty, and the arrangements of the flowers in her hair, and different little decorations superadded to her attire (which important performances took place on the step of a door opposite), seemed to be an object of interest to half the city; and the amiable Gorgons — which name I give them, not because they are ill-favoured — quite the reverse — but

because they inhabit this same Gorgona — crowded officiously round, all suggesting and talking together, and apparently disinterestedly desirous that the beauty of the place should maintain her position as fairest of the fair. Match me that magnanimity of the mind feminine in the capitals of the Old World!

As the following day was Sunday, I determined on not starting from Gorgona till early on Monday morning; but it was necessary to secure mules for that day. I placed full reliance on Señor R——'s coloured gentleman, but the afternoon wore away and he did not make his appearance. A loud beating of numerous wooden drums and sundry twangings of guitars and violins, announced that a fandango had commenced: I began to fear our knight of the ledger was twirling in the waltz, or threading the mazes of the Spanish dances in the bamboo Almack's, or on the smooth sward before the principal huts; but I thought it best to wait, having vainly inquired concerning his whereabouts. I could not engage mules, with the chance of his having already secured some.

In the morning of the second day, we saw from the aperture in our mud-floored room, which did duty as a window, the apparition

of the highly respectable truant, mounted on a caracoling *mustang*, and evidently mightily proud of himself and his prancing steed. Yes, it was certainly himself, in utter full dress, astonishing the weak minds of some of the inhabitants of Gorgona by his splendour, and having apparently breakfasted on a poker, other provisions being scarce, so upright was he, and assuredly having forgotten there were such humble animals as mules in creation. Without further ceremony I indignantly called to him, and requested to know what bargain he had made respecting the mules for our journey to Panama. This was a little unmerciful, as it recalled to the bold *caballero* on his curvetting charger unpleasing reminiscences of the counting-house and the pen. As to the mules, he had not contracted for any. No! he had made no "bargain;" and as he pronounced, with immense disgust, the unpalatable word, even his shoulders contracted, and his brow contracted, and all symptoms of a poker-breakfast suddenly disappeared.

I was in high wrath, and demanded to know why he had not done so? He had not thought about mules. There were none to be had; *los Americanos* had taken them all, and he glanced at his fiery steed proudly, as if he

would say, "to expect *me* to think of such a plodding animal indeed!"

"Well, then, horses — have you secured horses for us?"

"Tampoco, los Yankees had all the horses too."

The man was evidently bewitched by his own unwonted finery, possibly purchased by my forty dollars. I told him I was informed at the hotel, there were mules to be got, and I begged he would *instantaneously* make it his business to find them. He seemed to take my words, "au pied de la lettre," for he turned with a discomfited look to the nearest passer by, who was dawdling along the road half asleep, like a sonnambulizing snail.

"Do you know of any mules?"

"No."

He turned hopelessly to a little toddling urchin without any clothing, who was disporting himself hard by:

"Where can mules be got, Señor?"

"Quien sabe."

He then turned to another, who, with characteristic *nonchalance*, shrugged his shoulders, and went on.

It was difficult not to laugh at the dismal expression of despair this *caballero's* face assumed, thus checked in his new career of glory

down the main street of straggling Gorgona, "You see, Señora Miladi, it is quite in vain; I have inquired everywhere." He seemed to think it would be almost wicked to try any more, as opposing the laws of destiny; and really the man looked so completely stupid in his unaccustomed state and splendour, that unless extreme measures had been resorted to, and the poor soul pulled off his horse and dispossessed of his fine neckerchief, and his refulgent waistcoat, there was no chance of his returning to the full possession of his senses.

"*Muy bien*," I said, "but it is abominable, very, and exceedingly *disagradable*," and so inly resolving to rely on my own resources, I closed,—not the window, because there was none to close, but—our conference, and made preparations, forthwith, for summoning my best Spanish to my aid, taking as a guide, poor Sammy, the Hindoo Mozo at the hotel (of whom more hereafter), and having a mule-hunt at once myself.

Out we sallied, and soon came to a mule proprietor's abode, who took us to see his animals; but they were more the shadows of mules that had been, than actually existing mules in substance and truth. He acknowledged, after a little cross-examination relative

to their endurance and strength, that they were *enferme*, and he had given them physic. On we went, and I thought it would be a judicious step to go to Mr. Miller's hotel, and ask him if he knew of any mules which we might engage. Mr. Miller was very civil and obliging, and roared out a courteous answer to the requests which I shrieked vehemently in his ear. If this surprises you, know, oh, gentle reader, that a ball was going on in the next house, and that the noise of drums, violins, guitars—and gongs, too, I believe—was almost deafening. However, through an interchange of shouts, rendered necessary by the aforesaid din, I became aware that there were still several places where I might hope to get mules, and at the first one I visited, I saw some very fine animals indeed, but the proprietor put the most extravagant price upon them.

As I had taken care to have only money with me sufficient to defray my expenses on the road (for fear of robbery), and as these owners of mules demanded prepayment, the preposterous demands of this individual would have left me quite penniless, so I attempted to bargain with him, but he would hear of no reduction. Therefore I prosecuted my search farther, and at length made a very satisfactory bargain alto-

gether, which was not, however, finally concluded till the mule-owner had seen our trunks, and till I had made some inquiries respecting him, of the master of the hotel where I was staying, who assured me Signor —— was a very respectable and honest man, and he and his mules might be thoroughly depended upon.

The mules were to be at the hotel door at a very early hour in the morning; indeed, I allowed, in naming the time, for about two hours' dilatoriness, and we then went to enjoy the beautiful view from the edge of the bank, near a large half-finished house, which promised to be quite a palace of sticks. It was a lovely prospect: splendid hills rose in front, and the American encampment beneath, by the river, with its snow-white tents scattered about under wide-spreading mimosas and umbrageous sycamores, had a very pleasing and striking effect.

An open air fandango was going on at a distance, and with a considerable space between us and them, the drum and the guitar did not sound unpleasing. All the inhabitants who were not dancing, seemed promenading about, and the wreaths and bunches of natural flowers, in the hair of the women, and their light, aerial-looking dresses, gave an air of

festival gaiety to the whole place and scene: it really seemed a sort of fairyland.

One almost foolishly shrinks from the idea of a railroad coming through such a lovely, idle, flower-crowned, unsophisticated place; but we hear it will do so in the course of a few years, and as we came to Gorgona, we passed a number of rails, and a small mountain of wheelbarrows and tools, on the bank of the Chagres, in preparation for the commencement of the work. The insalubrity of the climate seems one great obstacle to its accomplishment; but by careful precautions and perseverance, I dare say its difficulties will be overcome.

It was some time before we could tear ourselves from the contemplation of this lovely view, but at last we returned to our hotel, and begged the almost ubiquitous Sammy to prepare our chocolate, and bring us some bread.

And now I must tell a little about this same marvellous Sammy, who was one of the Coolies imported into Jamaica sometime ago, from the East Indies. His Jamaica master, being, like many others, smitten with a wish to seek the new El Dorado of the world, came to the Isthmus with the intention of proceeding to California as soon as practicable; he, however, fell a victim here to

the Chagres fever, and left the unfortunate Sammy in a strange country, hardly speaking a word of English (which from the vast numbers of Americans crossing the Isthmus would have been very useful to him), and not a syllable of Spanish. He was taken, however, as a servant-of-all-work in this hotel, where I believe his master died, and he certainly had no easy place; the cry was "Sammy, Sammy," from morning till night.

It was amusing to peep out into the great *sala*, and to see poor Sammy incessantly scrambling in and out of his beloved hammock, whence he appeared never to move, save on compulsion. That hammock — one among many—seemed to him the garden of Eden, the concentrated essence of all happiness: but, poor wretch! he was no sooner in it than he was out of it, and if you watched for five minutes, you would be apt to imagine he was performing the feat of jumping in and out, so rapidly, as hardly to touch the swinging litter for a wager. "Sammy!" he was halfway in, and down he tumbled again: "Plate of boiled rice, Sammy." That done, away he posted again, hammockwards; stopped in mid career, "Some roasted bananas, Sammy;" off he stumped: these brought, he accomplished a

triumphant jump into the hammock ; "Sammy, Sammy," out again,—so that he rushed about incessantly, a most compulsory harlequin, and between every separate service, vaulted, or a half, or a quarter vaulted, as the time allowed him, into the tempting bag again, thus performing the most extraordinarily active feats of agility unceasingly.

And, indeed, the immense amount of exertion he went through, by thus running backwards and forwards, to and from the couch in mid air, was inconceivable, and by far the greater part of this labour was for the sake of repose and rest! He worked like forty dragons in order to be idle. He did pretty nearly everything, that he might do nothing—just that he might do nothing,—and as soon as he began doing it, he had to leave off, and work as hard as before. It was a sad sight to see him snatched back again twenty times in three seconds from his hanging nest of peace. Frequently he had to make a demi-vault in the air and spring round, and often his head would rest for a moment, while his legs still quivered in the atmosphere, as if they heard the call which the sleepy head did not. As to pedestrians walking a thousand miles in a thousand hours, what was that to poor Sammy running, and jumping, and plunging ditto ?

But a curious part of this singular exhibition was, that the poor Coolie always retained, in the midst of the most hurried exertions, the same placid lazy expression. He looked the very incarnation of all idleness while he was labouring most severely. He seemed at such times a sort of galvanized mummy—or a puppet, with its eyes half shut, pulled furiously by wires—or Morpheus himself forced to dance a jig and hornpipe by the German magic fiddle. So sleepy a countenance one never beheld, perhaps, as poor Sammy's. It was all leaden laziness; he looked as if he could do nothing indeed, *thoroughly*, and more nothing than anybody had ever done before!

Sammy was rather ancient, but had very fine features. I do not know what tint Coolies are exactly in general, but Sammy's complexion was much the same as that of an anthracite coal. His jet black nose was quite Grecian; he had large black eyes, that always looked half asleep, and splendid teeth. His costume was rather remarkable. Poor Massa's black hat was perched on the top of his large snow-white Hindoo turban, like a chimney pot on a China soup tureen. The rest of his dress seemed a mixture of East Indian, Spanish, West Indian, South American Indian, Yankean, Californian, English, and of his own invention.

I asked him how he liked the Isthmus. He made a piteous face, and after pausing a little to muster his best English, replied in this strain :—"Lookee, Madras bery nice, Jamaica so so nice, and dis no nice at all." With that he vanished to cries resounding and reduplicated into one grand chorus of, "Sammy, Sammy !" What was not wanted ? dinner, breakfast, luncheon, supper, all according as the hours of travellers varied. But he would turn by habit to the hammock first, make a desperate spring and bound, and then plunge back again, as the cries of "Sammy" increased.

A sort of book-keeper and superintendent of this palm-roofed Astor House was a native of Jamaica, who had a wooden leg ; and whenever Sammy heard the stump of the wooden leg, he tumbled out of the much-loved hammock in no time, for one of its chief occupations was routing out unfortunate Sammy. He seemed principally to have been engaged for that purpose — in short, as a whipper-in to Sammy.

But a delightful scene took place on one occasion, when one of the native boys, lounging near the door, saw the hammock (so dear to Sammy) unoccupied, while that gentleman was cooking, laying dinner, and waiting. All at once —as it seemed to ordinary eyes—in darted the

boy, and was ensconced in the hammock in a half-second. If the reader could but have seen Sammy's speechless rage and fury when on returning from one of his busy cruises, he had almost effected an entry into his port and haven of rest, and found it occupied by that intruder! A lion returning to his den, and finding it in possession of a monkey, or one of his own jackals, could not have been more fiercely indignant; but his rage and his jump were both cut short. "Sammy, pork-steak. Sammy, have done snoozing there." Poor Sammy snoozing, indeed! If ever he *had* been wide awake in the world, old or new,—in either hemisphere,—he was so then, in his unspeakable rage. With an infuriated gesture of menace at the boy, he darted away to get the steaks, set them down with a slam, which scattered the gravy like spray about, and cutting half a dozen insane summersets anticipatory, in the air, before he reached the hammock, began as soon as he got there (with a final bound that almost sent him over the other side), to knock the boy about with all his strength, muttering profuse Hindostanee compliments to him. The little rascal ducked and dived skilfully. He was lithe, and slippery as an eel in its teens, and Sammy's first and second blow seemed to fall on the air. 'Sammy, Sammy," was the cry. Away he

bounded, with the arm yet upraised to strike ; and whether the blow, which he probably could not stop from the force of its own impetus, fell on the owner of the wooden leg, or on the head of one of the California-bound way-farers, I know not.

I was truly sorry to be obliged to look after mules on Sunday, but the fever was spreading fast at Gorgona, and I did not like remaining there any longer than was absolutely necessary. We had seen several suffering from its attacks ; and the poor wooden-leg caught it. The following morning I saw him with his face perfectly scarlet with fever, and his bloodshot eyes almost starting out of his head, looking as unlike the sallow, quiet, composed person he had been the day before, as possible. Sammy actually snatched a whole nap of one minute and a quarter " by Shrewsbury clock," on that eventful morning.

When we took our little promenade in Gorgona, we had seen here and there a wretched looking, sickly object ; and on asking what was the matter, were always told it was the consequence and remains of the fever. One emaciated creature was almost a skeleton, with a ghastly death's-head, bandaged round. I suppose he had been shaved ; he was quite a shocking

spectacle. I asked if that, too, was the fever. "Si, si." And yet Gorgona is said to be a healthy spot; but I suppose these people bring the fever from Chagres, or some other insalubrious place they may have visited.

We were up very early on Monday morning, but had to wait a long time for the mules. I began to think I ought to have ordered them to be at the door the night before, to have insured their being there in the morning early. At last they arrived, and after a great deal of talking and loitering about, they began to pack the animals.

This is a curious sight, and interested us, though we had seen much the same thing in Mexico, but not so near. They appear to have the same *aparejos* and *alforgas* for the mules, and while drawing the fastenings tight, they plant one foot firmly, in the same way against the side of the animal, and pull with all their might. The mule is blinded during this process. As soon as the packing is finished, (which takes a long while in the dilatory way in which they set about it here) the bandage is taken off the eyes, and the mule trots away to rejoin her companions, sometimes with a reproachful snort, as if she would say, "This load 's too much, *parole d'honneur*."

On Sunday morning we saw our friends, Mrs.

H—— and Arethusa start for their *jornada*, to Panama, riding sideways on men's saddles,—as we also had to do; but Arethusa (who I must say, so far from having melted away, looked more substantial than ever) almost entirely concealed her mule, which, whatever might have been its actual size, appeared comparatively diminutive beneath its voluminous rider. (Forgive me, kind and amiable friend, I would fain say, and I know you will, for you are good nature itself.) Nothing, in short, of such an animal as a mule was clearly visible, except a pair of long ears and a tail.

After the lapse of a considerable time, we saw Mrs. H—— return alone, apparently in haste. We looked for the ears and the tail, but *they* were not to be seen. I imagined Mrs. H——, had forgotten something, and returned to find it; but I afterwards learned she had lost her little boy, who had strayed a short distance from the mule-path, gathering flowers, and had become bewildered among the dense intricacies of the trackless forests. She had returned, thinking he might have found his way back to Gorgona, and if not, with the intention of sending people from thence, in different directions, to look for him. We heard of his safety subsequently.

Our room, with its solitary aperture, com-

manded a view of the commencement of the road to Panama; and many an interesting and curious sight did we witness from it. One that was very characteristic of American go-ahead-ishness and independence, I will relate. A spare, eager-eyed "States' man," had loaded an obstinate looking animal with probably all his worldly goods, and was starting, or rather attempting to start, perfectly alone on his road to Panama, for the animal resolutely refused to budge, and he was dragging at it by an immense long rope with all his might and main, he at one end of the rambling street, and it at the other, and shouting out in English to the sauntering natives by the roadside, "I say, which is the road to Pana*maw*?" Another was stepping on deliberately, his bundle under his arm, and a huge umbrella, like that you see represented in Chinese rice-paper drawings, over his head, following the first path that came in his way.

We saw numbers start along this road (which was the right way) almost all with the same frank, free, earnest bearing, — and one felt they do not go only to gather up gold in the rich mines of that far land, now a part of their glorious country,—they go to help and assist in raising a mighty empire on those teeming shores of the great Pacific, to carry progress, order,

and civilization in their train, I have attempted to express this in the following lines:—

Beneath the Tropics' blaze of lustrous day,
The nation-founders take their glorious way;
Not solely for the vulgar thirst of gold,
Pass hurrying on the adventurous and the bold.
They haste to bear unto that distant soil
(To flourish soon beneath their patient toil)
Law, order, science, arts,—and all that springs
Beneath civilization's sheltering wings.
Pass—nation-makers! onward go!—
All earth shall yet your triumph know!

*Here*, their inspiring and momentous march,
Seems under one august triumphal arch,
By Nature raised, as though to greet and grace
Their conquering progress to the Chosen Place.
She shows her vernal pomp—her rich array,
And with her silvery voice she seems to say—
"Forget not *me*, and all I bring of joy,
Blest hoards of pure delights that cannot cloy.
On! nation-founders! bold and free—
But keep your souls still true to me!"

And not alone her outward charms appear,
The wanderer's wearied sense to soothe and cheer;
But all her gentlest influences seem,
Away from home,—to call up home's sweet dream.
The breath of flowers,—the stir of leaves,—the breeze
Whispering soft music through the embowering trees,
Seem still to speak of home, with tenderest tone,
And bid them still that pure dominion own.
On!—nation-framers!—do and dare—
Home-prayers shall bless you here—and *there!*

A thousand generations hence shall own
Your power—your influence, felt from zone to zone;
A thousand generations hence shall bless,
Shall praise you for their homes—their happiness!

Yours is a kingly mission, brave and high ;
On !—in the name of Truth and Liberty !—
'Tis a right royal progress !—round ye wait
The guardian powers that watch and guard a state.
Long ages needs your task ?—away !—
Enough is Freedom, and a Day !

Treasures ye seek, but treasures too ye take,
To yon fair shores, which *ye* shall glorious make ;
Treasures that globes of gold could never buy—
The wealth of Thought and Heart and Memory !
Generous affections, quenchless zeal and skill,
To mould, and rule, and conquer at your will !—
On to your task !—with mind resolved and soul
On fire to seize the prize,—to reach the goal.
Wide be your Flag of Stars unfurled,
Ye workmen, that shall build—a world !—

Wide be your Banner of the Stars unfurled,
And on, ye workmen,—that shall build—a world.
A host of nations, wreathed with power and pride,
Have rushed to glory, flourished, changed and died ;
And history bares them to your gaze ; behold !
High towers her pyramid of nations old.
Plant the sublime foundations of your own
On those chief heights of elder lands undone.
*Begin* with all they had of best,
And Heaven inspire ye with the rest.

The noblest heights that others have attained
(What time o'er earth with sovereign sway they reigned)
Shall be the lowliest step,—the humblest base
Of your bright state, in eagle pride of place.
There shall be felt through all its movements free,
The heavings of eternity's great sea.
No dull stagnation e'er shall check its powers ;
Like rounds of th' angels, ladder, all its hours
Shall higher lead, and higher still,
Till Time his measured march fulfil.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ARRIVAL AT PANAMA.—HOSPITALITY OF MR. ——.—HIS HOUSE.—CORAL AND PEARL OF THE PACIFIC.—THE "ESPIRITU SANTO."—DEPARTURE FROM GORGONA DESCRIBED.—A REFRACTORY MULE.—THE CERRO GRANDE.—ALLEGED VIEW FROM ITS SUMMIT.—A MAGNIFICENT FOREST DESCRIBED.—A FOREST ON FIRE.—THE AMERICAN'S ADMIRATION OF THE TREES.—THE FLOWERS IN THE FOREST.—DIFFICULTY OF PROCEEDING ON THE BAD ROADS.—ENORMOUS LOADS CARRIED BY THE NATIVES OF THE ISTHMUS.—ATTIRE OF TRAVELLERS TO CALIFORNIA.—FEMALE INHABITANTS OF THE ISTHMUS.—THEIR DISLIKE OF AMERICANS.—ARRIVAL AT THE HALF-WAY-HOUSE.—MRS. H —— AND HER CHILD.—THE AMERICAN CHARACTER EXEMPLIFIED.—THE JOURNEY RESUMED.—ESCAPADE OF A MULE.—A HALT.—THE INDIAN HUT.—ITS INMATES.—NOISES IN THE FOREST.

I CONTINUE (being now at Panama) my narrative of our transit across the Isthmus, from where I left off at Gorgona. But first, let me observe that we are under the hospitable roof of Mr. P——, where he and his daughter most kindly have arranged everything in their power to make us comfortable.

The house is charming, and commands an enchanting view of the majestic and mighty

Pacific; and almost perpetually, the most delicious and the coolest breezes blow in at the immensely large windows which open on broad balconies with wooden balustrades, some of them ornamented with rare and lovely plants.

There is a little green paroquet here, which is an immense favourite of V——'s, and a great amusement to her. She has undertaken to tame it, and as it is the most savage little beast of a bird I ever met with, it will task her powers to the utmost, and she will be the Van Amburgh of birds, if she succeeds. It already begins not to bite her quite as hard as it does other people.

From the windows we see immense numbers of palm-trees, growing to the very shores of the great ocean, and we can almost fancy the fairy bowers of roses, and of myriad blossoms we have been so enchanted with lately, are continued, and mixed with the labyrinths of coral and wealth of pearl under these placid, translucent, silvery-glittering seas of music and of peace. But coral grottoes and pearl are poor compared to the pomp of the tropical flowers.

While I am speaking of flowers, I must tell of a most lovely and exquisite one here, called, I am told, *Espiritu Santo*, which sacred name is given to it from its perfect resem-

blance to a white Dove. It is not in blossom now, so I have only heard of, not seen, its beauty; but I am assured the likeness of this snowy flower to the bird above-mentioned is quite extraordinary, and its loveliness consummate. There is another beauteous flower very common here, that seems to have long silky tassels hanging from it.

On the day of our departure from Gorgona, we had to wait—it seemed to me a most unconscionable time—while they were lading the mules; but patience is a virtue that is pretty well exercised on the Isthmus. At last all was declared to be ready, and the saddle mules were led up to the wooden piazza of the hotel. My little girl was very anxious to ride one that was handsomer and looked in sleeker condition than the rest; I had no objection. Our guides (of whom we had a good escort, and who were said to be *hombres muy respetables*) had no objection either, and we all mounted and started. We had not gone far before V—— disapproved of her mule being led, for one of the Mozos held its rein very carefully. I remarked then that they had not taken off a bandage that covered its eyes, and this circumstance, coupled with the fact of its being the only one they attempted to

lead, made me think it was not so quiet as the others. However, on being questioned, they said it would go very well, and at her urgent request let it go loose, and it seemed perfectly sober and steady.

We saw an absurd spectacle, though not an amusing one to the unlucky person concerned, who might have been a loser thereby. A mule, laden with numerous articles of luggage, was playing the most extravagant antics a little way from us, galloping along the valley, that was cleared here and there, with his heels generally cooling themselves in the air: *jets d'eau* of plethoric carpet-bags and divers bundles rained gracefully around him, and the unfortunate owner of the property rushed wildly after, shouting, and extending his arms, which only seemed to make the creature dance his *bolero* without castanets, more wildly, as if he took these demonstrations for "thunders of applause." At last, as if to punish us for smiling at the creature's extraordinary performances, it neared our quiet procession, and our own baggage-mules showed signs of joining in a general *contra-danza* or a Highland fling. When we saw the cherished carpet-bags of our souls, and darling packages of our hearts exposed to such fearful danger, we shook in our stirrups

(horridly clumsy things they were), but the danger passed over; the rebel mule was secured. The grief-stricken owner held in his arms his shattered bags and bundles, and with much emotion proceeded to examine the mutilated remains of various treasures, such as travellers only know how to prize (not pearls and diamonds, nor any such trash, but haply a jar of pickles, or something of the kind, invaluable, unreplaceable), and we went on our way, condoling with him, however, on his misfortunes.

I must not omit to mention that to the west of Gorgona is a hill called the Cerro Grande, and some maintain that from *this* (and not Monto Carabali), which is one of those heights forming the ridge which divides the Isthmus longitudinally, both oceans can be seen at once with a glass, and from this alone. Doctors differ, and they set the fashion to all the rest of mankind. I could not find that any one had ascended this hill lately to try the truth of the statement: the path is said to be extremely rugged and abrupt, and the heat of the weather affords an excuse for avoiding such a fatiguing expedition.

After we had crossed this valley, we entered a magnificent forest that appeared to become

thicker and thicker, till it almost shut out the intense light of a tropical day, and thoroughly screened us from the piercing rays of a tropical sun at its zenith! It was indescribably delightful. A cool emerald-tinted twilight surrounded us on every side, and still, as we rode on, we seemed more closely encircled and more completely canopied by the pleached and heaped-together branches. It was a ceiling and walls of foliage and flower-enamelled greenery.

When we got still deeper into that mighty forest, it seemed like a vegetable Mammoth Cave, and as if one was miles below the surface of the earth; for it appeared difficult to believe that otherwise, in the blazing noon of the Tropics, you could be so entirely sheltered from every ray of the sun, with only boughs and leaves above you. The rich underwood mingled its countless shoots and trails with the dense down-hanging garlands of parasites, as stalagmites meet stalactites in earth's cavernous recesses.

We heard a shower of rain at one time above us, like the tramp, tramp of a thousand fairy legions; but hardly a drop reached us (it was not a very heavy rain, of course). We saw scarcely a living creature in the forest (though we heard many), except insects, and

by them we were much assailed, though at the time we did not suffer so much as afterwards from their attacks. Besides the alligators, we had seen on the banks of the Chagres the ugly armadillo and various lizards, and had heard a loud roaring, which I thought perhaps proceeded from the puma, or South American lion, but was told it was the sound made by a large black monkey that frequents the Isthmus. The forests are said to be inhabited by the jaguar, black tiger, wild cat, ocelot, panther, and a variety of monkeys, who may often be heard chattering away briskly with their numerous comrades.

We have generally been pretty fortunate in seeing interesting sights in the countries we have travelled in, and during this ride to Panama we, for the first time, encountered that grand spectacle, a forest on fire. We rather suddenly found ourselves almost enveloped in a dense smoke, and presently the ground over which we were riding (it was a very narrow mule-path through that apparently illimitable and interlaced forest), and all the surrounding trees,—trunks, boughs, branches, leaves, and creepers,—became of a brilliant, intense, glaring sort of red orange colour (something like the hue of the ripest and richest of Maltese oranges

inside), and the most deliciously odoriferous scents pervaded the whole air, as if a thousand phœnixes were expiring at once in their burning spicy nests. In short, the forest was on fire at a little distance from where we were riding. The guides called out to us to push on, but not to be alarmed, for they said there was scarcely any danger, as the trees were so enormously large, and so thickly crowded and jammed together there, that it burnt very slowly, and also, there was very little, if any, wind (and that was, it appeared, in our favour). The trees, too, had been a little moistened by a late shower; so altogether we felt but little fear, and observed the majestic spectacle with feelings of tolerable security. There was, however, a very loud crackling of branches, like an advancing fusillade, and the sparks and ashes fell fast on us, covering us from head to foot.

We rode steadily on, and before very long emerged from those thick clouds of fragrant smoke which seemed redolent of frankincense, and of all the odorous breathings of "Araby the blest." We emerged, I say, from that perfumed atmosphere, and lost sight of the vivid scarlet and orange-coloured reflections of the flames, passing once more into the dazzlingly bright golden sunlight of the Tropics, for just

then we came upon a little clearing. We were glad to breathe freely, and shake the remaining ashes from our clothes, which were, happily, of very incombustible materials.

We soon plunged again into the giant woods. And here I wish I could convey to the reader the faintest idea of their astonishing beauty, and of their peculiar characteristics; so gigantic, yet so wondrously delicate in detail; vast, colossal bowers hanging over other bowers festooned and twining together in twenty thousand wild romantic shapes, and with that gossamer net-work of light creepers, flaunting here and quivering there, as if the rainbowed spray of myriads of fountains had suddenly been arrested and hardened by magic into permanent forms. Then *such* trees! studies in themselves; some like vast columns of burnished silver, with the most smooth brilliantly white bark you can imagine, and a dome-like top of magnificent foliage; others with glorious leaves, like great green stars, or rather three-quarters of a star, shining like sculptured emeralds; then a majestic kind of wild cotton tree (the silk cotton, I think), with its beautiful product, hanging like feathery snow from it.

A couple of Americans, armed to the teeth, and carrying large knapsacks, passed us (they

sometimes carry huge umbrellas, looking like parachutes turned topsy-turvy); and I heard one address the other: "I 've seen a many and a many trees in the States, to be sure, but I never saw a *single one* of these here before in my country" (a pretty widely spreading country too), "not one on 'em; it beats all natur, I swarn; it 's all new to me, though I 've seen lots of trees in my time; wal, I *have*."

Another inexpressibly lovely tree is the bamboo, which grows to an immense height here, and looks like heaps of gigantic green ostrich feathers. In some instances (on the bank of the Chagres) I saw it forming a most perfect Prince of Wales's Plume, of the most colossal dimensions, and yet of the most aerial and delicate lightness imaginable. Then there are the beautiful plants of the "Spanish daggers," and the coffee trees, the cocoa-nut palms (with the huge cocoa-nuts hanging so temptingly from them), and the zapote, with its large, splendid fruit; the mango, the calabash tree, and the ceiba, and multitudes of others.

And then there are the superb Titanic lilies, and the immense bananas, which, whenever exposed to the scorching sun, have their giant leaves cracked and divided by the heat, and which are sometimes split by the wind;

and there are literally roses wedged with roses, ever-lovely, and heaped in such close inextricable coils, that they almost seem a single mammoth flower; and wildernesses of hot-house plants (I mean hot-house plants in *our* country, with its coal-fire sun), hiding the soil with their lavish luxuriance, and almost forming, one with another, an indistinguishable mass, where the crowded dyes seem to shift, and change, and melt into each other, like the hues of diamonds by lamplight. It is indeed the poetry of vegetation. Yes! it is a mighty poem, written by the living sun on the earth, caught up by the elements, and vibrating, as it were, through the beating heart of eternal Nature, that is brooding, like the mother dove, mighty in love and loveliness, over her own offspring of beauty and beneficence.

Sublimely fair, however, as the scenery was, that we might not be deluded by the dream that it was Elysium, we had a road that might have better befitted Tartarus — a road that might well have been designed to torture the wandering spirits of flagitious mules—and of mule-riders too. Sometimes the descents were so precipitous that the creatures almost half tumbled, half slid down them; at other times they had to go stumbling about in break-neck

holes of frightful depth, as if they were about to seek in a subterranean passage a solution of the difficulties of the road!

Another disagreeable circumstance was, that the strong thorns belonging to various prickly shrubs, which encroached on the narrow path, caught our riding dresses, which were too long for this rugged expedition, and often nearly dragged us off our saddles. Mine, particularly, which was of very strong stuff, several times as nearly as possible drew me off; for the mule had a terribly hard mouth, and disdained the most vehement pullings of the rein, as my riding dress did the clawings of the stubborn shrubs. On one occasion, just as I hung between shrub and saddle, it kindly tore, and I somehow managed to find myself in the saddle again; but as to stopping the mule it was hopeless. Talk of "Patience on a monument," think of Patience on a *mule!*

At rare intervals a small clearing would let the sun come suddenly down upon us, like a thousand flashes of scorching lightning in one; but we had doubled thick handkerchiefs, and tied them over our bonnets, so that we did not suffer much from the powerful rays. We gathered the leaves of the fan-palm, too, and made additional head-screens of them; but in

general the light and heat were mellowed and softened by the overarching roof of trees I have described.

We met or passed immense numbers of natives, carrying often enormous loads, which they bear apparently in general, without fatigue. One man, especially, was burdened by a huge deal case, which looked as if it contained a frame house, at least, on its way to California; and it very likely was one, and an *iron* house "at that!" He did look tired, poor fellow; and the house, or whatever the mountainous load was, had slipped, and he could not get it rightly on again! He rested against a tree, and some of the good-natured California-bound emigrants, who were seated in a group hard by, eating their luncheon and reposing themselves (for almost all we saw walked from Gorgona to Panama, frequently making two days of it), went to help him. They gave him, at his request I believe, a calabash full of water, and assisted him to place the gigantic case (with a small hotel probably inside it), once more firmly and comfortably (!) on his back. It was with some difficulty he made room for our party, especially our baggage mules, to pass.

I have seen the porters at Constantinople

carry most enormous burdens, but I think I never, or hardly ever, saw so unwieldy a load on the shoulders of mortal man before. Some of the Americans exclaimed on seeing him, "It *must* be only an empty case;" but that was not at all likely, and the fatigue he exhibited proved it was much beyond the average weight they carry, for we saw others laden with large trunks, strutting on as if they had nothing but a feather on their backs.

I have written of a man thus perhaps carrying a house on his back like a two legged snail; I must speak, as a "pendant" to this, of an account in an American paper of a man being run over by a house—a curious accident. "A young man at Bath, Maine, met with a dangerous accident; a house ran over him, breaking his ribs, and injuring his lungs. They were moving the tenement, and he was caught by one of the rollers." We ourselves met a mansion taking a walk last summer, I recollect, or, I believe it was resting on its oars at the moment we passed by. This was on the borders of Canada.

The Californians, all with their gay scarlet flannel shirts (which they universally wear), were scattered about the forest on all sides, and their brilliant attire was glimpsed through the

woods at intervals; so they looked something like dismounted fox-hunters, thus reminding us of Leicestershire a little, though it would be difficult to find anything less like that highly-respectable county than this wild, gorgeous wilderness-forest of the South. Would not a Vale of Belvoir farmer think poor nature had gone mad, and required a strait-waistcoat here and a pair of handcuffs? Cheerily sounded the emigrants' friendly greetings to one another, and their inspiriting watchword; "Ho! for California!" I could almost have fancied the "Tally" added before the first word, and the last two suppressed.

We had to ford numerous streams of water, and were glad to drink at these from calabashes we carried at our saddles, hob-and-nobbing with our own thirsty mules. We were now approaching the half-way house, where we were told the Americans had erected a large tent-hotel; and now V——'s mule showed signs of his disagreeable temper, by quietly sitting down in one of these streams, and thus intimating his resolution to proceed no farther. Of course this could not be allowed, and after a great deal of persuasion had been apparently thrown away upon him, he suddenly bounded up and banged himself

against the trees with considerable violence. It was, therefore, necessary he should be led, and as soon as we arrived at the tent, it was decided he should be favoured with a load of baggage, and one of the pack mules saddled in his place, one of these being remarkably docile, and only not ridden because his superior strength rendered him peculiarly fitted for carrying the trunks. The ill-tempered individual thus got well punished for his impertinence and contumacy, by having to bear a heavier burden than he had before.

Besides the male natives (who were almost all carrying heavy loads), we met great numbers of the female inhabitants of the country, generally on the backs of mules. We frequently wished them good morning or afternoon in Spanish, and they returned these greetings always most courteously and kindly, with a native grace that was very pleasing. They often wished us a happy journey, and added various compliments on our riding dresses, which they thought *muy bonito, O tan hermosa,* and so on. I think there cannot well be a more simple-hearted and kindly-dispositioned race; and they seem as thoroughly happy, too, as they are unsophisticated, though certainly their happiness is not of an elevated or intellectual kind.

They appear, I think, to dislike the Americans in general, and the influx of the vast numbers of intruders, that have almost driven them out of their own homes since the discovery of the California gold mines, seems to be a subject of sore dissatisfaction with them. I verily believe their chief reason for disliking the Americans is, that the latter give them some trouble, which they abhor—and small blame to them, in their delicious do-nothing climate, where Nature serves them as the slaves of the Lamp did Aladdin, in the Arabian tale! And then *Los Yankees* hurry them, and cannot endure those slow lingering ways, so little suited to their own ultra-Anglo-Saxon habits of punctuality, despatch, and business. When the natives took us for Americans (as of course they did, till we told them we were not so, but *Inglez*) they would sometimes address us, as they evidently thought and intended, very sarcastically, mimicking people in a great hurry, and saying breathlessly, *vamos, go-a-head!—ho! poco tiempo, poco tiempo.*

We were not sorry, after going up and down more ravines, and gullies, and slippery and swampy passes, than I can recount (sometimes, that we might not tumble over their ears, leaning back till we almost touched the

tails of our mules), to reach the half-way house, and stop at a canvas hotel built by an American speculator in a small clearing where the sun burned with ferocious rays. However, there were some splendid trees near, which afforded shelter for the mules while they rested.

We got some very nice lemonade and orangeade here, and had the satisfaction of learning that Mrs. H——'s poor little boy had, by a lucky accident, found his way hither after a long and weary wandering in the forest; and his mother had come to claim him, having fortunately heard this fact as she was prosecuting her disconsolate search not far off. The poor little fellow fell fast asleep as soon as they laid him on a rude couch here, and it was thus, wrapped in slumber, she found him. The generous-hearted American who told me the touching tale, could hardly repress his emotion as he described the intense feeling of the poor mother, as she clasped her recovered treasure to her heart.

But such is the American: while he will affront with the utmost carelessness all kinds of hardships, dangers, and privations, and display under the most appalling circumstances the firmest presence of mind—as if, like Nelson in his boyhood, "he had never seen fear,"

and could not understand what it meant—his noble feelings will thrill at a tale of the sorrow of others, and his heroism fails him when some affecting incident appeals to his unselfish and generous sympathies. If the true hero-nature lives anywhere it is in the American: *if* the age of chivalry is *not* past—though Burke declared it was, in the Old World of Europe,—if, in short, chivalry still exists on earth, it is in the great and mighty West. I think I see a satirical smile on the reader's lips, although so many thousands of miles divide us; and I know if I were in a London drawing-room what a chorus would be raised of "dollars and cents!" &c., but I boldly write what I most conscientiously believe: and how absurd it is to keep harping on one fault (and it really seems almost their only one), as if either a nation or an individual could be absolutely perfect!

I heard another adventure of poor little George here. The proprietor of the hotel apologised very courteously for not having a wholly unoccupied room to show us into, as a poor sick gentleman was sitting down in his principal apartment; and he proceeded to tell me Mrs. H——'s unlucky child had fallen into the Chagres, having leant over the boat and overbalanced himself, and that this gentleman

had plunged into the river, and at great risk and with considerable difficulty, had saved him from perishing. But, during his generous exertions he had become, by some accident, jammed in between two canoes, and had had several ribs broken, and was otherwise much injured. On arriving at Gorgona, however,—it appeared contrary to advice,—his gallant spirit impelled him to proceed, though in a very suffering state; and assuring Mrs. H——, who was naturally anxious on his account, after his noble exertions on behalf of her little son, that the hurts he had sustained were very immaterial, he started for Panama, but became so ill and exhausted before he arrived at the canvas *posada*, that he found it indispensably necessary to remain till his recruited strength should enable him to proceed.

He came to speak to us, and seemed anxious Mrs. H—— should not be distressed or alarmed on his account, saying it was nothing, and we must tell her, when we saw her, that in a day or two he should be all right. But he looked exceedingly ill and haggard, and seemed to be suffering much. He was, I believe, no acquaintance of hers, but was accidentally passing by at the moment.

The guides and Mozos took a terribly long

time here to unpack and transfer the baggage of one of the pack mules to the one who had such an "ugly" temper. At last we rejoiced to find it was all ready, and, without further delay, we jumped into the saddles, anxious to lose no more time than had already been unavoidably sacrificed, in continuing our journey to the Pacific coast. Off we went, and off nearly went all the boxes, provision-cases, and *valises* that had been transferred to the unsafe keeping of that evil-disposed mule.

There was a very steep hill to slide down almost directly after leaving the half-way house, and it was an excessively narrow path. We had barely got beyond the entrance to this, when the infuriated mule in the wildest rage at having these unwonted burdens packed on his back, attempted to dart past us, and, in so doing, nearly knocked one of the riders off her saddle. Great was the consternation amongst us: we contrived by some means or other—I have not the least idea how—to make our mules clamber up the least steep precipice-like acclivities of the banks, which rose on either side of the narrow pass, and we had a capital view of the long-eared delinquent tearing down the steep hill like a crazy thing, sending the other poor baggage-mules right and left (who

happily declined a kicking-sweepstakes), as if they were of no more account to their unnatural brother than our despised carpet-bags, which he was throwing about as a juggler does balls.

What a sight to us it was to see those two scornful heels sending our innocent *valises* in all directions; it was a frightful spectacle, and alas! the provisions! Heels, in place of hands, presenting refreshments—so awkwardly, backwards, too—it was unendurable. To see one's dinner a quarter of a mile up in the air, and one's supper a quarter of a mile down in a swamp, was not exhilarating. It would not have been surprising, as the kicking-mule careered onwards, had we been struck by Parthian drumsticks, or rained upon by portable soup (only there was none of the last). At length this disreputable quadruped was caught, and the packages were collected, and the whole process of packing had to be gone through with again. There we sate, watching that seemingly interminable arranging of boxes and bags, and wondering whether the cantankerous animal would play at ball with them all again, or get up any other little extempore *divertissement* for our amusement.

After waiting for an immense time, we were once more able to proceed; but the mules

were no longer as brisk as they had been. They had been out a long while, and had had very hard work; and while we were more anxious to hurry on to make up for lost time, they were more desirous of loitering on their toilsome way. Poor things! one could not wonder at it;—but it was tiresome, and, besides this, we had not got rid of all annoyance from the rebel. It appeared quite out of place in its new situation, and was avoided by common consent, being clearly not on speaking terms with the baggage-mules, who considered it a mere interloper. It was sent to Coventry by the saddle-mules, too, whom it had disgraced.

Restless and irritable, I think it must have been a poet among mules—or genius of some kind: it would lag behind, and then suddenly, probably driven on by the guides, rush forward like a maniac, and half stab us with a sharp corner of a portmanteau, or thump against us one of our own unconscious carpet-bags. We found these visitations so unpleasant, that we resolved not to allow the animal to play us such tricks any more. We therefore insisted on his being kept in front, and the moment he showed symptoms of delaying on his way, we set up with one accord the peculiar sound the Mozos make to encourage or threaten the mules;

and this vocal melody, which was assisted by the powerful arguments and voices of the guides (who probably performed an *obligato* stick-accompaniment to the chorus), had fortunately the desired effect. But, no doubt, the creature, not accustomed to being a pack-mule, became really fatigued, and paused frequently, not with evil intentions, but to rest. However, such bugbears had our own tame boxes become to us (and driven against you by a headstrong mule, they are formidable weapons), that we continued to urge it to go on before us by the cries we had learned from the guides, and our voices had but little rest, any more than the foolish mule had.

It was almost constantly "stopping the way." We had no sooner driven it on than it paused again: it was like one of those great buzzing, teasing flies that, towards the end of summer, perfectly haunt you, and if expelled from your hand, are found on your face, and so on. Now we found our friend sticking on a bank, threatening to tumble down on us if we went on, like an avalanche of mule and *mangas;* and now just standing across our path: and now again he would turn short round, as if to dare us to single combat, and sometimes would play at bo-peep behind the trees—in

short, he was the dread and horror of us all, and a cry of "here he comes!" was sufficient to send us all helter-skelter.

A weary American trudging on alone under an accumulation of afflictions, in the shape of blankets, bundles, cloaks, and knapsacks, whom we overtook, had compassion on the poor naughty mule, and humanely interfered in its behalf. "Indeed, ladies, I think the creature's nigh tired out: better let him rest a little." But we had lost so much precious time by these various unforeseen misfortunes, that we could not stop, and we knew by experience what allowing the four-footed culprit to loiter behind would bring on us, and the horrible nudging of trunks and elbowing of boxes, to which we should subject ourselves, probably to the demolition of our ribs. So we declined this; and the state of the case was explained to the humane traveller, and, as he looked almost fagged to death beneath his mountain pile of luggage (and as a reward for his humanity to our tired tormentor), I begged him to put part of his heavy load on one of our lightly-laden mules, which he gladly did.

We were now at a more open part of the road, but soon again we plunged into a thick forest for a short time, and then arrived at a

partial clearing. The day-light now was beginning to wane, and I was surprised to see one of the leading mules taken by the guides out of the road along a smooth path to the right. The rest of course followed, and on inquiring what was the reason, the head guide came and said, in consequence of the unfortunate delay it would be safer to wait at an Indian village in the wood till morning, as the road farther on was very rough and bad, and the forest so impenetrably thick that it would be very dark; also, that one of the guides with the baggage-mules had hurt his ankle very badly in scrambling among some stumps and blocks of stone, and that it was absolutely necessary he should rest.

After a little parleying and demurring, I consented to remain at this Indian village till the moon rose (when, as it was full, it would be a little lighter than most days in England); and wishing good-night to the weary American traveller, who was "bound" to join some of his companions at an American encampment a little way beyond, and who did not seem much to like the prospect of threading the dark masses of forest alone without the protection of our escort, we pursued our way to the Indian village.

We found one or two of our mules already unpacked, and the poor guide who had hurt his ankle, evidently in much pain. I told the head man we were expected at Panama, and must positively start when the moon rose, and then we proceeded to examine our quarters. But we found this hut by far the most horrible of any we had yet seen anywhere. It was entirely full of a dense suffocating smoke, and there were I do not know how many old women and squalling children, and dogs, and rats, and toads, and mice, and probably ducks, and pigs, and turkeys, and chickens, besides, of course, an unlimited allowance of entomological curiosities.

The chief old woman, who was very good-natured and kind, compassionating the horror with which we regarded the accommodations of this cane-caravansary (that seemed a Noah's Ark of dry land), brought us out, at our request, a comfortable bench, and we seated ourselves there, not feeling very sleepy or tired, and exceedingly interested by the spectacle of the tropical forest by starlight. But such a noise as there was in that same forest! It seemed a perfect Babel of brutes, and birds, and insects, and reptiles : there were roarings, and howlings, and barkings, and hissings, and yellings, and jabberings. Whether a fashion-

able tiger-cat held a *conversazione* that evening, or some learned monkeys were imitating the ways of man, and making interminable speeches in a congress or parliament of their own, I know not; but it seemed to me there never was such a collection of chatterboxes got together before. Poor *dumb* beasts, indeed! it was a perfect "clatter *versus* patter," which almost drowned the squalling of the children, and chiding of the women inside the hut, and the growling remonstrances of an old man who interposed his paternal authority every now and then, and ordered them all to sleep immediately.

But not for long! The clamour outside, it seemed, re-awoke them; and if the denizens of the forest seemed inclined to nod, the din of the huts roused them again—so they appeared to keep each other always awake.

I wonder if anything could have composed them to a nap. If one had preached them a very long sermon, or recited to them an extensive speech of Mr. Anstey's in our House of Commons, it *might* have lulled them to sleep. Let this gentleman pardon me, for I do not mention his as exceeding others in heaviness —only in length. As to which is the dullest among all the speeches delivered *there*, the

powers forbid that I should have to decide: for "in that lowest deep, a lower deep," &c.

At length the moon rose in her glory, and a beautiful sight that moon-rising was. I, vigilant and wakeful, without loss of time, went round to the back of the hut, and called up the guides, who after a proper quantity of dawdling, excuses, mule-losing (I think they had left one unpicketed, on purpose), and sauntering, sat down again composedly by a little fire of sticks they had kindled, and said sleepily the mule would come (I make no doubt it was our long-eared torment of the previous day)—the mule would *find herself;* they must have a little breakfast. And they accordingly breakfasted on a cigar each, and then began saunter the second. At length, to our glee, the truant was found, the packing completed, and off we started for Panama.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE JOURNEY TO PANAMA RESUMED.—BEAUTY OF THE MOONLIGHT. — THE PAVED CAUSEWAY. — FIRST VIEW OF THE PACIFIC.—THE AMERICAN'S OPINION OF THE OLD SPANIARDS. —AND OF THE PRESENT NATIVES OF THE ISTHMUS.—ARRIVAL AT PANAMA.—THE CITY.—THE GRAND PLAZA.—THE BAY.—THE CATHEDRAL.—JESUIT CHURCH AND COLLEGE.—RUINOUS CONDITION OF PANAMA.—AMERICANS IN PANAMA BOUND FOR CALIFORNIA.—THE CLIMATE OF PANAMA.—BREEZES FROM THE PACIFIC.—GENERAL M——. — INSECTS AND REPTILES IN PANAMA.—THE FIRE-BEETLE.—THE FAMILY OF MADAME H——. —A SOCIAL CUSTOM IN PANAMA.—HALF-STARVED HORSES AND MULES.—PANAMA BECOMING AMERICANIZED.—THE CARRIAGES IN THAT CITY.

It was moonlight when we resumed our journey;—and such a moon,—earth, air, and sky, were all swathed up like costly treasures in glittering cloth of silver! it was resplendent. We had much admired, during the night, the glorious southern cross, and another lovely constellation, also very much in the form of a cross: all was so beautiful, that heaven and earth seemed almost contending for the palm of loveliness.

We rode silently on, overwhelmed with ad-

miration, and after going for some time through the thick forest, which made the moonlight appear like a soft illumination through an emerald-coloured glass or transparency, we suddenly emerged from the woods on a clearing; and so dazzling and glorious was the flood of light that poured down upon us, that I exclaimed to V——, that we must have been mistaken in the hour, as it was broad daylight. But a glance overhead, where the triumphant suzerain of the night was riding in her zenith, pouring, I may say *snowing*, down rays of intense white light on every side, undeceived me. It was truly splendid: the air seemed all powdered crystal, or shivered diamonds. The heavenly arch looked so high, and so clear, that the eye seemed to see for a million of miles, up and up, and the air appeared all One Star; verily, the glory sank and melted into the very soul.

Some of our mules had become very lazy. I do not think they had had enough food when we stopped, and our lame guide limping slowly on, caused our cavalcade to journey at a very gentle pace. At length, the morning dawned, the sun rose, and we began to look out with intense anxiety for the mighty Pacific; but the intervening hills still screened this king of

oceans from our longing gaze. The road was extremely bad and rough, but we were too eager to mind that very much.

The mule in disgrace was almost forgiven, but the *pas* was still scrupulously given to her—no question of precedence was ever attended to with more rigid etiquette. We did not at all agree with Lady Macbeth "stand not upon the order of your going;" our very mules, so trained and taught by us the day before, seemed inclined, when their treacherous comrade lagged a little, to make a sidling curtsey, and wait till she resumed the lead. She was still sent to Coventry; and if it was she who was lost in the forest that morning, it was doubtless owing to her going to have a chat with some wild cat or monkey, who did not know what *mauvaise odeur* the creature was in.

At last the rugged causeway seemed a trifle better, and we met numerous groups on foot and horseback, and felt we were getting near the coast. This paved causeway is said by some to have been made by the bucaneers when they were in possession of Panama; by others, to be the remains of an excellent road left by the old Spaniards. As to its state in some parts now,—like that of the pack of hounds

described by a boy some years ago, as wanting nothing but new horses, new huntsmen, and new hounds,—it only requires new stones, new paving, new workmen, and a new road.

Soon after we had to cross a savannah, and we still kept our eyes fixed on the horizon, forgetting even the kicking mule, who took the opportunity of waiting behind, and coming up again with one of her peculiar Chifney rushes, after which, she and the Pacific contended for our anxious regards and attention, and they ran a rather severe race, the majestic Pacific (a splendid bay) winning at last only by a nose—so nearly was it a dead heat.

And now our guides stopped at a hovel near the road, and dandified themselves prodigiously. I suppose they have a depôt of *sombreros* there, and of handkerchiefs and various toggery. The poor lame Mozo stopped at this place; he could proceed no further; so, with a diminished escort, we prepared to enter into the city. At last the glorious Pacific came in sight, and magnificent it looked; but so long had I looked forward to this happy moment, and dwelt in fancy on the pleasure of beholding this mighty ocean, that it seemed more like hailing again an old friend, than meeting a new one.

Somewhere near that part of the road, we crossed a handsome, though rather dilapidated bridge, over a stream. An American was sitting down to rest there, and as I passed by, drew my attention to it, saying it was almost the first mark of civilization he had seen in the country.

"And it was built by the old Spaniards," he said, "the natives tell me, as everything else was that they have that's worth showing. The old Spaniards did nobly by the country; but they won't even keep their works in repair. Some are gone, and some are going, and these niggers get more and more like savages."

The compliment to old Spain I fully agreed in, but not in his sweeping censure on the natives of the Isthmus. Though idle they certainly appear to be, I think their government may bear great part of this blame. A republican form of government is not, cannot be, suited to people so utterly unprepared for the onerous task of self-government, unfitted by nature, and unaided by education.

It was not long before we were trampling along the streets of the old picturesque city of Panama, among groups of natives, and of scarlet-garbed Americans, who, as we passed, asked us a question that had been put to us fre-

quently along the road, always with the greatest civility.

"You're one of the 'Georgia's' passengers, I think, ma'am ?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen many parties still on the road ?" &c.

I was much struck by the first sight of Panama, ruined and neglected as it appeared. The suburbs, however, were even less imposing than such parts of a city usually are, consisting of tumble-down Indian huts, squalid and poverty-stricken, some patches of cultivated ground, and some antiquated *ranchos*. Afterwards we crossed the line of the old fortifications (strong walls and ramparts still surround the town) ; and we immediately came to some noble edifices, proud and princely, though in a ruined state. Their sad condition is almost veiled, and their decay beautified, by the profuse and brilliant vegetation that has poured over them,—as the sea closes, with its bright and flashing waters, above a wreck.

We rode through the Grand Plaza, which was then thronged with people, among whom were crowds of Americans ; and we passed an extremely noble church, and an old convent of great architectural beauty, ornamented

with very handsome pillars, with Corinthian capitals.

Panama is beautifully situated. The lovely bay has been often compared to the famous harbour of Rio Janeiro. The city stands upon a tongue of land that runs far out to sea, ending in a sharp point that is partially overflowed at high tide. Its many decayed but stately churches, its venerable dilapidated monasteries and mouldering convents, boasting many architectural perfections, and crowned with the picturesque vegetation of the Torrid Zone, wherever time has made melancholy rents—its noble stone buildings, terraced and balconied—its ancient fortifications and broad plazas, and, in the vicinity, its numerous gardens and flourishing orchards, villas, and *ranchos* and *haciendas*, and grounds for pasturage, and groves of palms, all render it striking and highly interesting. The longer I stay, the more I admire its situation, which at the base of this range of beautiful hills, with the Pacific washing three sides of its tapering promontory, is very grand.

One broad and verdant mountain, deluged in vegetation, uprears its graceful crest close behind it; and a chain of other noble mountains, crowned with forests beyond the south-eastern

shore of the bay, appears perpetually enveloped in soft-vapoury clouds, which make them, perhaps, seem higher than they are in reality.

We had the other evening a delightful walk on the ramparts: they command an enchanting view of the bay, and a series of green and fertile islands, among which Taboga is the most beautiful. The towers and churches of the fine old town, so picturesque and touching in its decay (at the foot of those indestructible hills, apparelled in the undecaying pomp of tropical nature),—nearly a hundred miles of fruitful shores exposed to the vision, which takes in the grand curve of the gulf,—and the miniature bays and creeks fringed profusely with the feathery palms, and those beauteous islands and forests, and the mountains afar, and the mighty ocean rolling its foamy surf with its solemn, measured march high up on the shore, all united to make the scene one of consummate beauty and grandeur.

The venerable cathedral here is a very fine building; and what is left of the ancient Jesuit church of San Felipe is extremely imposing. The magnificent arches spanning the nave are wreathed and crowned by a forest of wild vines and luxuriant shrubbery, and these rich masses of foliage form here and there a

partial roof for the otherwise uncovered building. A stately college, which had never been completed, looks on one of the plazas. Its pillars and pilasters are splintered and decaying; but Nature has stepped in, and thrown her own mantle of glory around the fading beauties of her sister, Art. There are some Franciscan and Augustinian monasteries here in tolerable preservation; but, altogether, I certainly never beheld anything like the desolation and decay to be witnessed during a short walk in Panama.

In almost every street may be seen several ruins: had I not been prepared for the general state of dilapidation in which this once prosperous city is now, I should have thought, on the first glance, a succession of dreadful fires had lately taken place here, from the dreary multitude of yawning chasms on all sides, where edifices of different kinds have been.

Nay, at the *fonda* where we first were staying, we needed not to walk out to see ruins, for in front of the hotel was a gaping space, lumbered with tottering, roofless walls, and overgrown by shrubs, bananas, and a hanging wilderness of climbing plants. On the old ramparts, with their massive, frowning battlements, may still be seen some antique guns of

Old Spain: they are said to be made of the beautiful and costly bronze of Barcelona.

As a fortified town, Panama, notwithstanding its being girt by strong and solid walls, cannot be said to be placed in a favourable position. It appears to be entirely commanded by the hill behind it, which is easy of access, and planted on which, the artillery of a foe might completely batter and destroy all its—ruins!

We live very quietly here, and I hear but little of California; but I was told the other day, there are about ten steamers lately gone, or on the eve of going there, from hence. Still, vast numbers of Americans are detained here, unable to proceed to their destination. A little while ago, they say, there were between two and three thousand here. Most of them encamp near the town, and some, I am afraid, suffer many privations and hardships from the delay they are exposed to.

I have just heard, since I wrote the above, that nearly a thousand Americans started yesterday, in different steam vessels, for California. They are generally a superior class of emigrants that come this way, as it is an expensive route, and the "rough lots," as they often term them, ordinarily go across the plains with their waggons and tents, or by the tedious way

of Cape Horn. Tickets have been at a tremendous price, and it is said great impositions have been sometimes practised on the more inexperienced or easy emigrants.

Yesterday I was suffering much from that odious hay asthma again, which I had last spring. But for this, I might be returning now, or very shortly, to catch the English steamer at Chagres; but I fear I shall not be able to do so just yet. It is at this time of year, only, one is subject to these attacks, and if I were at sea now, or in the heart of a city, or on a desert plain, I should no doubt entirely escape this infliction; but in the midst of the munificence and luxuriance of Nature here (for this seems a city and garden, and forest in one), trailing her glorious masses of foliage to the very shores of the Pacific, and flinging her living *earthly*, beauty—clad in those royal robes,—almost into its majestic waves (her grandest watery empire), I am thus victimised and tormented. Were I seeking for poor Sir John Franklin, now amidst the barren Arctic ice, probably this vile enemy would keep at a respectful distance; but here, where a mighty Pacific Ocean of streaming flowers and foliage overflows into the sister Pacific of pearls, and shells, and rolling billows, and flashing waves, it pitilessly assails me.

Not so, however, in equally beautiful Mexico ; but that is, I think, a most peculiar and matchless climate,—the Elysium of the world ; bracing as England, beautiful as Italy—nay, *far* more so—and blazing with the unutterable glory of the richest and rarest tropical splendours. Mexico really seems hardly of the earth, and the high-sounding name the Chinese claim so presumptuously for their country, would scarcely appear to be a figure of speech, if applied to lovely, matchless Mexico, — "the Central Flowery Land, the Celestial Empire."

Perhaps the people may not be quite worthy of it—what people on earth could be ? but they appreciate and love it, I think, deeply ; and for a traveller they are just the population for it ! They may want, to a certain extent, energy, enterprise, solidity, habits of business, and even, in some respects, patriotism ; but they are, I think, the most splendidly picturesque people (not excepting even the Greeks—that is, the *Albanian* Greeks) in the whole world. They dress their country well ! they become and grace that beauteous land, and do its outward aspect justice, by thus adorning it appropriately with their romantic-looking selves, and their magnificent drapery-like *serapés*.

We had some splendid singing and playing here the other night from a young French gentleman (partly of Spanish origin), M. de M., who is on his way to Valparaiso and Buenos Ayres, from Paris. He is staying with Monsieur Le C——, the agreeable and amiable French consul. He sang admirably, and his instrumental performances were extraordinarily fine (there is an excellent pianoforte in the drawing-room here). M. de M.'s musical memory appears to be prodigious: he seems to know almost all the modern operas through by heart, and his singings out of the "Prophète," "Beatrice," &c. were magnificent. Miss P. sings extremely well, and she accompanied him very charmingly in some duets.

There is a delicious breeze blowing to-day through my wide-open windows from the Pacific, and it almost carries away my paper as I write. The breeze seems getting stronger (it is too hot to shut the window), and my writing stands a considerable chance of being wafted off to the "Grand Ocean," as they call the mighty Pacific.

I went a little time ago to see my amiable acquaintance, Mrs. H——. I found her at home, and Mrs. —— also, who is at the same hotel. I saw the poor little boy who had had such narrow escapes: he has hardly yet re-

covered his terrible and fatiguing walk. His mother tells me, when she first saw him, he was much altered in appearance, and his throat was frightfully swollen — she thought from over exertion, and frequent exposure to the sun ; but it appears to me probable, he may have eaten something injurious during his weary march, that may have produced such an effect. Poor little fellow! his chief distress seems to have been the anxiety and alarm that he was aware his mother must be undergoing during his prolonged absence. Mrs. H—— hopes to start for California in a steamer that goes in a few days, and I trust she will arrive there without any further annoyances and trials.

General M——, formerly President of New Granada, dined here last night. He seems a highly-informed person, who has travelled much in Europe, and who would be extremely agreeable, but from a painfully difficult articulation, in consequence of a severe wound received in battle, in his mouth and jaw, which has left a terrible scar. It is said the ball passed completely through his mouth, cutting his tongue in twain in its passage. It was impossible to avoid thinking of the self-same process (though by the instrumentality of a different weapon),

to which are subjected magpies, or ravens, or both, in the Old World, to improve their powers of pronunciation—it certainly has the diametrically opposite effect on the human biped.

General M—— appears to be a most public-spirited man, and to have the good of his fine country much at heart. His attention is greatly occupied just now by the contemplated rail-road from Chagres to this place, and he is said to be busily engaged in transporting slave labourers from one of the States in the interior of New Granada, to work upon it. This is a free State.

Insects and reptiles abound here. It is necessary to shake one's gown well before putting it on, in case a scorpion may have taken a fancy to the garment. Miss P——'s maid shook one out of hers the other day. A few evenings ago Mr. P—— had a passage of arms with a gallant knight-errant, in the shape of a chivalrous centipede that was boldly wandering over the wall close to where some of us were sitting. The meandering reptile, on being attacked by a huge paper-cutter, kept up for some time a persevering running fight. The assailant brandished his weapon of attack vigorously; but when your foe has so many

legs wherewith to run away, it is difficult to catch him "any how you fix it." After sundry desperate stabs at the wall, which the centipede, with great celerity and dexterity, avoided, the poor reptile was partly caught, and his tail docked, but the rest of him ran off, putting all his best legs foremost, and evaporated. Nothing was left as a trophy of victory but the poor fellow's tail, and a select few of its many legs. I was sorry for this *dénouement*, as I cannot bear to think of the mutilation and pain of even a reptile; a prompt and speedy death is so far preferable! However, I am not sufficiently read in entomological history to know whether centipedes, as some other reptiles are said to do, can laugh at such mutilations, and grow together again; if so, probably the following morning he would return to look for the missing portion of himself, and neatly patch himself up, in no time.

A magnificent fire-beetle was caught in the *sala* last night; the illumination it cast was splendid. It shone with amazing brightness through a cambric handkerchief that was used as a temporary prison for it: one might almost have been afraid that it would commit arson unintentionally, and burn its transparent dungeon. Its incarceration did not

seem to diminish its glorious lustre at all. I was afraid it would be hurt, but it literally made *light* of everything. Miss P—— afterwards held it to her ear, and it is impossible to express the effect this beauteous living ornament, this animated diamond, produced: it would have made jewels of the first water look dull and dim near it. It cast a splendid glittering glow on Miss P——'s beautiful dark hair and delicate cheek—it was really exquisite. It afterwards flew up to the loftiest part of the immensely high roof, and settled there: it flung a lovely fairy-like light over the rafters, and seemed like a star that was shining through the roof.

We have made acquaintance here with a very amiable and accomplished family, one of the most distinguished in the place, that of Madame H——. She is a delightful person herself, and her daughters appear highly educated and exceedingly pleasing. One of her sons is more like an Englishman than a cavalier of the Spanish race, and so perfect are his accent and manner of speaking our language, that I could with difficulty believe he was anything but genuine Anglo-Saxon. They are of pure Spanish descent.

They have in the rich native families here

a charming custom, especially for hot countries. After dinner, all the company rise and adjourn to another apartment, fresh and cool, where the dessert is set out, and the fruits are mingled with the loveliest flowers. Of course, all odour of dinner is thus entirely left behind. I think it is even more refined and pleasant than the Havana custom I have spoken of before.

We escape under the consul's hospitable roof one source of great annoyance to us, and that is, the sight of numerous poor half-starved horses and mules, that we used to see from the hotel, and which seem to make a practice of promenading the streets for food. They eagerly ate any morsel of old crust thrown out to them, and were evidently in a famishing state, trying with their poor noses on the ground to pick up something, in vain. The fact is, I believe, that some time ago, these then deserted streets were covered with grass, and it was the universal custom to turn animals loose to graze there, as in a meadow. Now the busy trampling feet of thousands of Americans have destroyed that formerly abundant street-pasturage; but the inhabitants, mostly averse to innovation, continue the practice, and the wretched creatures often starve

to death in the streets. Their carcasses are dragged down to the beach, and there they are left to poison the air; and the horrible odour is often plainly perceptible in Mr. P——'s residence, so that it is necessary occasionally to shut the windows, and almost endure suffocation from heat, in order to escape the sickening effluvium.

The city in some respects seems becoming Americanized, but not in important particulars, as the foregoing statements will sufficiently prove. But when you take a little promenade in the roughly-paved plazas or streets (walk you must, for there are no carriages), you will hear "Oh, Susianna," on your right side, "Uncle Ned," on your left, "Hail Columbia," from the balcony overhead, and the "Arkansas hunters," from the shop at your side. I make no doubt, from what I hear, that shandy-gaff, and hail-storms, and mint-julep, are constantly kept in readiness for any that require them.

But imagine what a change it must seem to us, not to see a carriage of any description ever in the streets of Panama, having so lately left the Havana, which certainly, if any place can be so, is almost too full of rolling equipages —in short, from the most over-carriaged town

in the world, we came straight to the most under-carriaged one. I asked some one the other day, whether there was not even a one-mule-chaise in Panama. "No," was the reply; "but Señor —— *has* a cart"— evidently that was thought to be a great march of improvement. A single cart (for it *is* the only one) in the chief town of a country, where soon a railroad is expected to be laid down! — it will be a jump, indeed!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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